MEMOIRS

OF

MARY,

A

NOVEL.

By Mrs. GUNNING.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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LETTER XXXIII.

Extracts from Lady Jane Petworth's Letter to Lady Auberry.

I Found the Duke ſitting at his eſcrutoire, and very buſily employed in looking over ſeveral papers. I uſe no ceremony in going to him when I pleaſe: his kindneſs and affection to me at all times, relates the tender reſpect in which he holds the

virtues of my dear departed Siſter, better than the moſt elaborate inſcription that could be engraved on monumental marble.

The door being half open, I would have gone back when I ſaw him ſo much engaged, but having caught a glimpſe of me before I could retreat, he called after me, and deſired I would return.

I was never more glad to ſee you, Siſter, ſaid his Grace: ſo far from interrupting the buſineſs I am employed about, your preſence will facilitate it.

I made no reſiſtance: he held out his hand, and placed me in a chair next to his own.

There was in his manner a ſolemnity, and in his voice a languor, to which he was not uſually accuſtomed. I thought, too, he looked pale, anxious, dejected. I felt ſhocked at an alteration ſo viſible, and enquired eagerly if his Grace was unwell, or if any thing had happened to give him uneaſineſs.

I do

I do not think myſelf quite well, he replied, but I have no cauſe in the world for uneaſineſs. Perhaps you are alarmed to find me more ſerious than you expected. This change may be owing to the nature of my preſent employment. I have been occupied ſeveral hours on two ſubjects that muſt make a man thoughtful, if he ever thinks at all: the one, in arranging my temporal affairs; the other, in bringing my mind to determine on a matter which is of greater importance to my ſucceſſor than all the poſſeſſions to which he will be entitled at my deceaſe.

Good God, my dear Duke, I cried, you talk of being ill, and you talk of arranging your temporal affairs: have you told the Ducheſs that you are indiſpoſed?

No, he replied; and I muſt deſire that you do not name it to her: you are the only perſon of my family to whom I confide myſelf on this occaſion. My Wife's conſtitution is ſo exceedingly feeble, and her attachment to me ſo tender, that if I

was to tell her the ſentence my friend Doctor ——— has announced to me, I ſhould probably have to lament her loſs before a diſunion more deſireable to myſelf might perhaps take place.

I was leſs aſtoniſhed than afflicted, to hear him ſpeak in this manner: had he been addicted to ſuperſtition, or in any way fanciful about his health, I ſhould not have been half ſo much alarmed; but on the contrary, I have had ſuch inconteſtible proofs that the firmneſs of his mind was not to be ſhaken, as made me believe him fully capable of his preſent great, yet ſtrange, exertion of reſolution. I love him for his goodneſs to me, and for his having made the beſt, the moſt exemplary of huſbands, to my amiable Siſter. Can you wonder then that a tear fell on my cheek, and that I was utterly unable to reply?

He did not augment my concern by appearing to obſerve it, but proceeded to inform me, in terms the moſt calm and collected,

collected, that the day before he had been ſeized very ſuddenly in the Houſe of Lords with a giddineſs in his head; had left his ſeat abruptly, and ſtaggered towards the door, where he knew his ſervants were waiting. He remembered that they lifted him into his carriage; he alſo recollected that he bade them carry him to Doctor ———, but at the moment he was placed in his chariot, memory, ſenſe, life, all forſook him; and he was taken out, apparently dead, at the houſe whither he had deſired himſelf to be conveyed.

Doctor ——— was fortunately at home, and immediately opened the veins in both arms, not waiting to ſend for a ſurgeon to performan operation ſo immediately neceſſary. The effort was attended with ſo much ſucceſs, that in three hours his Grace was enough recovered to return home, where he ſaid nothing of the accident that had happened, having before requeſted his phyſician, and commanded

his ſervants, to be ſilent on the ſubject. Nor were the family in Groſvenor-ſquare ſurpriſed at ſo long a detention, as he often ſtaid in the Houſe, if any *debates* of conſequence were going forward, to a very late hour.

But how, cried I, my dear Brother, preſſing his hand, (for I thought at this awful moment he was quite as dear to me as if I had really been his ſiſter,) how is it that you cannot ſuppoſe this ſickneſs to be accidental, and that it will not be attended with the melancholy event to which you juſt now alluded?

I'll tell you, my kind Jane, ſaid he, with a ſmile that penetrated to my very ſoul, becauſe it ſpoke the language of conviction, I will tell you honeſtly, that on peremptorily demanding of my friendly Phyſician, whoſe ſkill has never been diſputed, what was the nature of my diſorder, and what might be its moſt probable conſequence; he paid that reſpect to my underſtanding which is due to every man

man who is neither a milk-ſop nor a coward, by not endeavouring to conceal from me that the diſorder was a ſtroke of apoplexy; that I might ſurvive a ſecond *ſhock*, but that a third would terminate my exiſtence.

And are you to take no precautions, I exclaimed, to prevent a ſecond or a third attack?

Yes, ſaid he, I am under the beſt direction in the world, and will omit no means that he adviſes to prevent, or at leaſt protract a ſecond viſitation. However, remember this ſecret muſt reſt between ourſelves. If I recover, well; if otherwiſe, my poor Wife need not have her eyes opened to ſee my danger, which may be yet at a great diſtance; and probably many years of *her* life would be imbittered by the horrors of expectation.

Do not grieve thus, my good Siſter, continued he (ah! Lady Auberry, I could not conceal the ſorrow that oppreſſed me), though I ſhould like to live, I am not un-

willing to die. Doctor ——— adviſes me to try the Bath waters, and I mean to go there in May. You ſee, Jane, I do not ſuppoſe my ſummons to be ſo near as you ſeem to apprehend.

God forbid it ſhould be near. But why, my Lord, would you put off the trial of the waters till May: if they are thought efficacious, why not try them immediately? The Ducheſs, who is partial to Bath, will not be diſpleaſed with an excurſion there at this ſeaſon. Can you have a better pretence for your journey than to give her pleaſure? Dear Duke, let me prevail for heaven's ſake!

I cannot go ſooner than May, Lady Jane. I have many affairs to ſettle before I leave London, and if you have the patience to liſten to me, I will explain in part what they are. But before I begin, I muſt give you the ſatisfaction of knowing that your kindneſs and your company have already done me more ſervice than I expect

expect to reap from phyſical preſcriptions of any ſort.

His Grace made this obliging declaration in ſo chearful a tone of voice, and with ſo pleaſant a ſmile, that one half of my fears vaniſhed, as I obſerved the favourable change that had taken place on his countenance; and I waited his further communications with the greater avidity, becauſe I ſuſpected the two deareſt of all my young friends would be the ſubject of them.

[Lady Jane Petworth, unlike the greater part of her ſex, who hold it a duty incumbent on them to ſtuff more lines into a letter than the paper was made to contain, broke off at this place, concluding at the bottom of the third page, but continued the intereſting converſation in another epiſtle, which was began immediately after ſhe had finiſhed the former, and which the Editor is determined to recollect for thy benefit, dear Reader.]

His Grace, proceeded Lady Jane, looking me ſteadfaſtly in the face, aſked if I could or would tell him whether Miſs Montague's affections had been engaged prior to her coming to London.

I anſwered, without heſitation, that two years ago I believed it was underſtood ſhe was to have been the wife of Lord Auberry. This marriage would have been with the approbation of your Ladyſhip, I ſaid, had it taken place; but that every ſuch intention ceaſed on the part of the Earl, ſoon after he went abroad, at which time the attachment mutually ended, and never could be renewed.

Something like this my Wife has hinted to me; ſhe had it too from the beſt authority—from herſelf; and yet I can hardly believe that any man would take upon himſelf to contradict a report that does him ſo much honour.

What contradiction, what report is it your Grace alludes to? If it be any thing in diſfavour of Lady Auberry's granddaughter,

daughter, put it in my power to convince you, dear Duke, that her actions muſt be free from blame, whoſe ſoul is ſo pure, ſo ſpotleſs as Miſs Montague's.

I give you unlimited credit for your aſſertion, as well as for the friendſhip you profeſſed for my Ward, and I think perhaps quite as highly of her merits as you do; nevertheleſs, you muſt hear what I have to ſay, when I ſhall be as ready to lend you my undivided attention, and not only to aſk your advice, but to follow it, as far as it may be conſiſtent with the completion of a certain plan, which I have this morning finally adopted.

Lexington, continued he, is the ſon of my brother; Miſs Montague is the daughter of my friend. I have long intended them for each other, provided, on ſeeing my Ward, I ſhould find her perſon and accompliſhments equal to the expectations I had ſanguinely formed of what a young woman ſhould be, who is deſcended from ſuch a couple as was her lovely mother and

that elegant Montague, the friend of my riper years, and the beſt companion of my boyiſh days. I need not tell you, that when I did ſee her, they were more than anſwered; from which moment, what was only before a wavering inclination, became the moſt fixed and the moſt ardent of all thoſe wiſhes I was capable of forming for the honour of my family and the happineſs of my nephew.

My wife was the only perſon I entruſted with my private intentions, and ſhe did not diſapprove them; nor were we diſpleaſed to obſerve, that from the very firſt interview, Lexington began to attach himſelf to the beautiful miſtreſs we had deſtined for him. He thinks our views are directed to another object, and I am perſuaded has never ventured to make any lover-like ſpeech, though we ſee plainly enough he would have no other language to our ward, if he did not fear our diſpleaſure as well as oppoſition.

It

It was more the Ducheſs's opinion than my own, that we ſhould not, at leaſt for the preſent, take away this forced reſtraint from his conduct: ſhe is, you know, a very ſenſible woman, and there is nobody ſo proper as herſelf to manage an affair of this ſort, in which delicacy is an indiſpenſible requiſite. I therefore, without enquiring into her reaſons for keeping the young man ſo long in a ſtate of painful ſuſpenſe, conſented to reſign into her hands the arrangement of this buſineſs, only reſerving to myſelf the liberty of haſtening or retarding the completion of my work, as circumſtances may lead me to think the one or the other moſt neceſſary to my determined plan of proceeding.

Now, my dear Jane, ſpeak and tell me if you approve of my conduct on this occaſion, I mean ſo far as it has yet been explained to you.

Approve it! I repeated in a tranſport of joy, oh, my Lord, who is there in the world

world that will not adore your goodneſs to theſe amiable young people, ſo worthy of your affection, and ſo deſerving of each other!

Have you no fears, Siſter, for Lexington's intereſt in the heart of Miſs Montague:—I have too many on that ſcore; diveſt me of them, and I ſhall be the moſt contented of men.

I would anſwer, I ſaid, for the freedom of her heart at preſent, and that it would never be a man of fewer claims than Mr. Lexington, who could in future hope to make an impreſſion on it. As for his intereſt, added I, with a ſmile, I have no fears; ſhe already regards him as a brother; he is too handſome, too elegant, too like herſelf in all good diſpoſitions, to run the leaſt riſk of being refuſed, where there is no pre-attachment to exclude his pretenſions.

I would fain be perſuaded, returned his Grace, that the caſe is as you repreſent it; and yet I have my doubts, that if Lord

Auberry

Auberry ever did make addreſſes to my Ward, and was again to renew them, whether ſhe would not ſtill prefer him to Lexington.

If I know any thing of Miſs Montague, my Lord, there are few men who would not find a more ſucceſsful title to her eſteem than Lord Auberry. But in the beginning of our converſation on this ſubject, I remember you dropped ſome hint of a report of a *contradiction*, and now I cannot but obſerve a particular ſtreſs laid on the word, *if*, when your Grace ſaid, "*If* Lord Auberry ever did make addreſſes to my Ward?" Has not Miſs Montague told the Ducheſs that he *did* make propoſals, and that he *was* accepted? has not her Grace repeated it to you? can you, therefore—— I was proceeding, but he interrupted me.

I know what you would ſay, and I feel that I have been wrong in not acquainting you before with the reaſons I have for my unſettled opinion. Whether Lord Auberry did

did or did not offer himſelf to Miſs Montague, is yet, I think, to be determined.

No, it is already determined, I replied with ſome warmth; and if you deſire it, my Lord, I will give you inſtant proof that Lord Auberry did offer himſelf. A contrary ſuppoſition muſt not, cannot be ſupported even for a moment. I haſtily drew out my pocket-book, in which was depoſited your Ladyſhip's valuable manuſcript, ſo humorouſly entitled Annals of Modern Love, which would at once aboliſh all the Duke's ſcruples, and complete my triumph.

I put it into his hand, with an air of exultation, and watched every turn of his countenance, whilſt he peruſed and reperuſed it with marked attention, and the ſtrongeſt tokens of aſtoniſhment.

Having read the contents twice over, he folded and returned the paper to me; but inſtead of diſcloſing his ſentiments, as I expected he would have done, he pulled the bell in ſilence, and on the entrance of a ſer-

a ſervant, he ſent him off with a meſſage to Mr. Lexington, ſignifying that his immediate attendance was requeſted; or if he happened to be gone out, then to leave word at his houſe, that his Grace ſhould expect to ſee him in Groſvenor-ſquare, as ſoon as he returned home.

I waited till he ſhould break a ſilence to me ſo anxious, ſo intereſting; though I pretended to conceal my emotions, and appeared to buſy myſelf in replacing the letter in its former ſituation; but before I had put it up, he begged I would indulge him with another draught of the ſame cordial that had already adminiſtered ſo much to the relief of his ſpirits: and forgive me, Siſter, added he, if I am unable to thank you till I have repeated the ſalutary doſe.

Had he ſpoken a volume of eloquence, he could not have explained the workings of his mind more to my ſatisfaction; and as I gave him back your charming little hiſtory, I ſaid, yes, dear Duke, I forgive you

you with all my heart, becauſe I can as eaſily comprehend your ſilence as I could underſtand the language of any other man. Whatever your doubts have been, I ſee they are all cancelled. I ſee you are a convert to truth. You cannot refuſe to credit ſuch a voucher as Lady Auberry.

He looked delighted, but made me no anſwer, and began reading again, with the ſame or greater avidity than before. Sometimes he would ſtop for a moment, and ſometimes I heard him mutter ſoftly to himſelf, excellent Parent!—amiable Mary!—execrable———! No name followed the laſt exclamation; but I knew there was only one that could ſupply the vacancy, and I filled it with that of Auberry.

I am indeed, cried the Duke, (giving me back the precious depoſit) I am indeed the convert of truth; I revere the moſt reſpectable of her diſciples, and I love the faireſt of her daughters. In what a light have you made Lady Auberry and Miſs Montague

Montague appear to me! If I wiſhed for their alliance before, I am now more ambitious than ever to attain that honour; and on my Nephew's ſucceſs, a great deal of my own happineſs muſt depend. Be the date of my enjoyment ſhort or long, as it may pleaſe Heaven to direct, I ſhall receive as the ſupremeſt of its bleſſing Miſs Montague into my family.

A tear, but it was manifeſtly a tear of pleaſure, ſtrayed down his cheek, as he ſpoke thus of your grand-daughter; I could have accompanied it with many more of my own, but fearing to ſoften his mind too much for his preſent critical ſtate of health, I contrived to ſuppreſs them, and requeſted he would explain to me on what foundation thoſe doubts were raiſed, which had gained ſo much ground on his belief, and produced him ſo much uneaſineſs.

I will tell you, ſaid his Grace; and when you have heard my apology, you may poſſibly not accuſe me of being leſs candid than credulous, for though I could not abſolutely

abſolutely refuſe to credit the word of a man, whoſe honour at that time I had no reaſon to ſuſpect; yet, it was quite as difficult for me to ſuppoſe the affair could have been miſrepreſented by Miſs Montague to my Wife, particularly as the Ducheſs informed me ſhe never was intruſted with the tranſaction as a matter of boaſt, but that it was revealed to her in conſequence of a demand made by herſelf, which Miſs Montague's ingenuous ſoul could not reſiſt. When ſhe gave up her ſecret, no ſacrifice was meant to vanity, but it was the offering of an innocent and great mind, at the ſhrine of candour.

How ſweet are the praiſes of thoſe we love! How infinitely dear to my affections is your faſcinating Mary! I hardly dared to breathe, for fear I might interrupt them. The Duke too was equally enlivened by his ſubject; his colour revived, his eyes ſparkled; his whole countenance was altered, as if by enchantment, from what it appeared an hour before. In

ſhort,

ſhort, I never ſaw him look better, I never ſaw him look ſo handſome, ſo animated, as at this moment. I could have wiſhed, for his ſake, that Miſs Montague had continued much longer the exhilarating theme of his converſation, and the burthen of his ſong; but for my own ſake, or rather for the gratification of my curioſity, I was not ſorry when he proceeded to give me the following moſt aſtoniſhing particulars:

He ſaid there had been reports circulating for ſeveral days, that Lord Auberry was not only engaged to Miſs Montague, but that ſhe was quite as much attached as himſelf; indeed, added he, there are ſome who do not ſcruple to ſay the balance is greatly on the lady's ſide; that her diſtance and reſerve, when they happen to meet in public, is nothing more than a political manœuvre to keep the affair ſecret, as by getting about in the world, it may at laſt reach the ears of Lady Auberry, who, from private pique to his family, had ſet her face againſt that alliance, which

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the young people waited only for her ladyſhip's death to ratify.

It was not conſiſtent with my deſigns in favour of Lexington, continued the Duke, that I ſhould be totally regardleſs of ſuch rumours as theſe, they militated againſt the intereſt he might hope to make in her affections, and againſt his future peace, neither of which could ſuffer, at leaſt I thought ſo, provided I was properly cautious in my enquiries, before I permitted him to try his fortune—a trial which muſt ſubject him to the bittereſt of all diſappointments, if the different accounts I heard were founded on reality.

Had theſe reports come altogether from her own ſex, I ſhould have given them very little conſideration; becauſe, being leſs a man of words than of obſervation, I have remarked ever ſince Miſs Montague has been my Wife's viſitor, that all mothers who have daughters, and all daughters who have expectations, are alike averſe to her perfections: but they reach-

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ed me through a channel leſs liable to objection; I heard them circulated by ſeveral men of whom I have a good opinion; ſuch authority was not to be placed to the ſcore of envy, hatred, or malice; however, perhaps they may have come to my ears in as doubtful a ſhape, through the medium of diſappointment; for amongſt many other propagators were Lord Selby, Sir James Melvin, and Lord Silveſter, all lately rejected by my Ward. They have ceaſed to viſit here, and decidedly attributed their want of ſucceſs to no other cauſe than her preference for Lord Auberry.

I ſometimes thought that I would aſk Miſs Montague herſelf, for the ſolution of what appeared to me a perfect enigma; but on re-conſidering her declaration to the Ducheſs reſpecting his Lordſhip, I was ſtruck with the impropriety of giving a ſhock to her delicacy, by ſeeming to ſuſpect her veracity. I had already applied to Sir Aſhton Montague, who, from the habit

bit of friendſhip in which he lives with this reputed lover, was likely to give me the information I wanted; but I found him more reſerved on the ſubject than I expected; and inſtead of aboliſhing my doubts, he only added fuel to the fire of my ſuſpicion, by inſidiouſly obſerving, that though he never intermeddled in the private affairs of his friend, he imagined it did not require a teleſcope to diſtinguiſh through the thickeſt veil of diſſimulation which could be thrown over a lady's inclinations, that Miſs Montague had no particular objections to Lord Auberry.

I could no longer keep ſilence, but cried out, Good God, what a villain is that Sir Aſhton Montague! Aſſure yourſelf, my Lord, he was the original propagator of a report ſo injurious to the moſt generous and the moſt candid of human beings.

The Duke looked ſurpriſed, and aſked if I had any particular foundation for my extraordinary ſuppoſition?

I con-

I confeſſed, that in the circulation of this curious fabrication, I had come in for as much, and perhaps, as early intelligence as his Grace; that I had aſked no leſs than three young men, all of whom had ſeen and all admired Miſs Montague, from whence they got their authority for ſuppoſing her under any ſort of engagement to Lord Auberry, when every one of them gave up to me as their author Sir Aſhton Montague, whoſe miſchief is the more dangerous, becauſe he has the undeſerved honour of being her relation.

Well, replied the Duke, I muſt acknowledge, Jane, that however he might pique himſelf on being, in general, a man of honour, on the preſent occaſion he has choſen the part of an incendiary and a raſcal. But I am going to give you a proof that duplicity is not the vice of one man only in this ſingular age of craftineſs; for, on my putting the queſtion to Lord Auberry, whether or not he had any pretenſions to my Ward, this was his poſitive reply—

I never gave Miſs Montague reaſon to ſuppoſe it, my Lord, and muſt be excuſed from anſwering any further queſtion.

This was a poſitive renunciation, and when he atteſted it, there was nothing like heſitation in his voice, or diſcompoſure in his countenance to diſcredit my belief of its veracity; of courſe, I declared myſelf ſatisfied.

Now I appeal to you, Lady Jane, if my uneaſineſs has ſprung from credulity; and if, on the ſolemn aſſeveration of Lord Auberry, I am not in part exculpated for harbouring ſuſpicions injurious to the dear girl, in whom we are both ſo warmly intereſted.

I aſſured his Grace, that I not only fully acquitted him of being actuated by weakneſs, but that I adored the lenity with which he treated Miſs Montague, when poſſeſſed of ſo ſtrong a proof that her conduct muſt have been highly artful, almoſt beyond the extenſive reach of mercy to have pardoned it.

I will

I will tell you, ſaid he, how I felt, how I reaſoned, and how I acted, after my interview with Lord Auberry; though I ſhall find it a difficult taſk to make you underſtand what have been my variety of opinions ſince that time, till the moment you put into my hand Lady Auberry's impartial repreſentation of this ſtill incomprehenſible buſineſs.

For three hours after I had been with his Lordſhip, I did not ſee my Ward; it was a circumſtance in her diſfavour; the letter of credit ſhe carries in her open countenance was not before me; I had no force to contend with Lord Auberry's aſſertion. I was more diſpleaſed with what I then thought coquetry in her conduct than I now like to recollect, as it raiſes a pang of regret for being at that moment, when I was condemning her of art, myſelf the dupe of artifice.

We met at dinner—our party was large—ſeveral young men, evidently attached to her, aſſiſted to form it—they were

placing themſelves at table. When I came in, Lexington and Lord Elderton were ſeated, one on each hand of her; but the moment I entered, ſhe requeſted that one of them would move to make room for me. I took the chair ſhe had cauſed to be vacated, and ſaid to myſelf, this is not the propoſal of a coquette, neither can a coquette look like a divinity preſiding over, and regulating the pleaſures of ſocial enjoyments. In that light appeared Miſs Montague, whoſe face was not more illumined by the artleſs ſmiles of good humour, than chaſtened by a ſweet and modeſt compoſure, which, if not abſolutely neceſſary to complete a faſhionable beauty, we old men are apt to conſider as the credentials of an innocent heart, uncorrupted manners, and the criterion of a ſuperior underſtanding.

What a painter you are, my Lord, ſaid I, how great the likeneſs, and how lovely the portrait you have juſt drawn of Mary Montague; yet this is only a talent, but the

the noble ſentiment which left you open to conviction, may be called a virtue of the firſt luſtre.

Perhaps, returned he, I deſerve not all the applauſe you are willing to allow me, becauſe my faith ſo often wavered. When I had the countenance of my Ward, or the beautiful ſimplicity of her actions, before my eyes, it was then ſhe was faultleſs; but when they ceaſed to be the immediate objects of my contemplation, the words of Lord Auberry reverted to my mind, and I could in no manner account for them to her advantage.

Between two opinions it was a conſiderable time before I could determine what method to purſue, whether to haſten my projected deſign of uniting her to Lexington; or whether it would not be doing him greater juſtice to prevent the alliance from taking place. Why I at laſt concluded that it ſhould proceed, at leaſt without hindrance on my part, was a converſation I drew her into, of which I made Lord

Auberry the ſubject, without ſeeming to chooſe it from any particular motive, and on this occaſion the propriety of her anſwers convinced me that if there had been any error on her ſide, it muſt have proceeded from miſtake, rather than the mean and wilful deſire of impoſition.

Nothing of this matter has ever eſcaped my lips, but to yourſelf; for, though the Ducheſs is more partial to Miſs Montague than I have ever ſeen her to any other young perſon, yet I thought it might probably weaken her intereſt in that quarter, had my Wife been inſtructed in the myſterious diſavowal of Lord Auberry, ſo very contradictory to Miſs Montague's own aſſertions; for which reaſon, I was ſilent on the whole tranſaction.

What a mountain of anxiety, Siſter, has your preſence removed from my mind, continued the Duke. I had, indeed, before you came in, made it up to letting the young people come together if they choſe; but it was only a ſight of

Lady

Lady Auberry's manuſcript that could have completed my happineſs in their union.

God be praiſed, ſaid I, with as much thankfulneſs of heart as if a peculiar bleſſing from heaven had that inſtant lighted on my own head. And now, dear Duke, I am ſure you will no longer impoſe reſtraint on your Nephew, or retard that event in which the felicity of ſo many is involved.

Not a moment will I retard it, he replied; I ſent for Lexington with no other intention than to tell him he may do as he pleaſes; and that if he can prevail on Miſs Montague to accept his propoſals, the ſooner he preſents her to me as my niece the better I ſhall be ſatisfied. This, added he, was the very buſineſs which I juſt now told you would detain me in Town till May; for, after the warning I yeſterday received of how ſhort a date my continuance here may be, I determined, if poſſible, to witneſs the eſtabliſhment of

my nephew before my final ſummons of ſurrender might arrive.

His Grace would probably have ſaid more on the ſame ſubject, if the Ducheſs's carriage had not juſt then driven up to the door. We both roſe and went to the window, from whence we ſaw Mr. Lexington diſmount from his horſe, firſt aſſiſt the Ducheſs to get out, and afterwards your lovely Mary, whoſe hand he did not think it incumbent on him to releaſe, till he had led her to the room we occupied; nor did ſhe ſeem to regret its being made the captive of ſo charming a conqueror.

[The Editor humbly hopes this ſpecimen of memory will be thought ſufficient by all deſcriptions of readers, as not another word in Lady Jane's letter is to be remembered.]

Miſs

Miſs Montague's Journal continued, ſix days of which are in the Catalogue of Papers ſtolen, or miſſing.

Feb. 28, 17—, *Morning.*

All the buſtle and confuſion of moving furniture from one place to another—driving us from one room to another, and turning the houſe quite topſyturvy, thank my ſtars, is at laſt over, and the arrangements for this one night's entertainment completed, in the moſt magnificent ſtyle that can be imagined. The Ducheſs tells me it will coſt the Duke two thouſand pounds. My God, what a ſum! I could almoſt wiſh it better beſtowed.

The wreaths which ornament the hangings have been tied up partly by me, and wholly under my direction. They were not finally fixed to their reſpective ſtations

till four o'clock this morning, and it was impoſſible to get a wink of ſleep till then for the unceaſing noiſe of the hammers; my bed-room being immediately above that which was the laſt finiſhed. I have not ſeen them ſince they were put up—I muſt however go now and take a peep at them, that I might be the better able to furniſh out a ſketch of the *tout enſemble*. I ſhall take Jenny down ſtairs with me, for I believe ſhe is the only ſervant that is yet riſen in the family.

It would divert you, deareſt Grandmam, could you hear the ſimple remarks of my foſter-ſiſter on the preparations going forward: it was but yeſterday ſhe told me that there were more cooks and confectioners in the Duke's kitchens, than there were trees in the Great Park at Riverſdale.

I have now been through the whole range of apartments, and can conceive nothing ſo like them in appearance as thoſe deſcriptions of inchanted caſtles and fairy palaces,

palaces, which I have ſo often, and with ſo much pleaſure, met with in the Arabian Nights Entertainments, a book of infinite imagination, always your favourite, and which my dear Miſs Beauly tells me in her laſt letter, ſhe now often reads to you, when you are fatigued with more abſtruſe ſubjects, and relax from more ſerious ſtudies.

Where ſhall I begin—where end—I hardly know how to ſelect particular traits of ſplendour, when every thing I look at is ſplendid.

White ſattin, with deep gold fringe, are the temporary hangings of every room; the chairs, ſofas, and even the benches, are all covered in the ſame ſuperb ſtyle of magnificence; but the beautiful wreaths of roſes, which have no other contraſt to their brilliant colour, but their own green leaves falling on the white ground, produces an effect exceedingly pleaſing, from the preſervation of its ſingular ſimplicity in the midſt of a thouſand other attractive

objects, which convey to the mind ideas of grandeur only.

Of all the other embelliſhments, nothing pleaſes me ſo much as the white and gold frames, contrived to repreſent arches, which form a noble avenue from one room to another. Theſe frames are made to ſupport ſuch a profuſion of coloured lamps as muſt produce more than a double portion of meridian day, when they are all lighted.

The ſide-boards for refreſhments are arranged from the top to the bottom of what I call the lamp-promenade, for there is ſpace enough for two people to walk abreaſt on each ſide of the tables; and the arches being open, whoever does not chooſe to take refreſhment within the avenue, may receive it from without.

I could ſtill employ a long hour on my inventory of fine things, if, like a prodigal, I was inclined to ſpend all my riches at once; but I rather give the preference to that kind of œconomy which will leave me

me ſomething to regale you with when I return to Riverſdale.

Dreſſing Time.

I have many ſubjects, ſome of one ſort, ſome of another, to fill up my paper, though the Ducheſs's frizeur, who is ordered to decorate my head for the evening, ſhould take three hours in ſetting it out to the beſt advantage.

I began my journal* with an act of humiliation. I confeſſed the error which had once led me to ſuppoſe that the Ducheſs of Cleveland had leſs of kindneſs than of *hauteur* in her compoſition. I am more and more convinced, every day,

* Remember, Reader, the firſt ſix days of this Journal was loſt,

that

that kindneſs is the conſtitutional property of her mind, which would have mingled with all her perfections in any ſoil but a Court, and in any ſchool where the language of adulation had not been ſpoken. I ſhould be the moſt ungrateful creature living, if I had not made this change in my firſt opinion, and the moſt unjuſt, if I had not declared it.

I again repeat what I have been ſaying for the laſt ſix days, that I am obliged to confeſs myſelf a bankrupt, in every thing but gratitude, to the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland; for ſure it will never be in my power to return that exceſs of goodneſs with which they have both diſtinguiſhed me. Indeed my heart is quite penetrated by the dear indulgence they have granted me this morning—yes, my deareſt, my beloved, my revered parent, you will very ſoon ſee your own Mary at your feet, and her gracious guardians, this charming Duke and Ducheſs, will themſelves conduct her to you.

When

When I went down to breakfaſt, I found only Mr. Lexington in the anti-room. He has been ſo unwell lately, and ſo melancholy, that we have all been ſeriouſly alarmed about him. Without knowing what were his complaints, how was the remedy to be applied? He would have no phyſician; every body therefore was his phyſician, each having a different preſcription, which would be ſure to do him good; and I have heard him, in the courſe of an hour, adviſed to try twenty experiments: hot baths, cold baths, Bath waters, Briſtol hot wells, a tour to the Continent, electrification, animal magnetiſm, and aſſes milk, have been each ſtrongly recommended.

Richmond happened to be our drive yeſterday morning; the Ducheſs went there to give ſome orders about removing the hot-houſe flowers, which are to be placed promiſcuouſly with the refreſhments under the illuminated arches, and to form a magnificent pyramid, intermingled with lamps,

lamps, as a termination to the grand avenue.

We had not been employed many minutes in giving our directions, and ſelecting thoſe pans which were moſt adapted for the purpoſe of beſtowing beauty or fragrance to our plan of operation, when we were quite unexpectedly joined by Mr. Lexington; we kept him ſo buſy for more than two hours, and gave him ſuch animating exerciſe, by making him aſſiſt us to arrange the buſineſs in which we were ſo anxiouſly engaged, that to-day all his complaints are flown, and I never ſaw him look ſo well, ſo gay, ſo ſatisfied.

The whole merit of this wonderful cure does not entirely belong to our ſkill, or his own exertions; at leaſt he would have me believe ſo. For you muſt know, he has confeſſed a ſecret to me this morning, and as he did not deſire me to be ſilent, I think I may intruſt you with it.

Mr. Lexington, then, has done me the honour to attribute all his indiſpoſitions, and

and all his ſolitary moments, to your poor Mary; her good opinion he wiſhed to engage; he deſpaired of engaging it; which deſpair, he ſaid, had oppreſſed his ſpirits, and preyed upon his health. In ſhort, it was a very long and a very ſtrange ſtory that he told me; but the truth of it being fully atteſted by the Duke and Ducheſs, I had no reaſon to ſuſpect its authenticity.

Deareſt Grand-mama, I have referred him to you for my anſwer. Without your approbation I will enter into no engagement. With it, what objection can I form to a man, whoſe worth is univerſally acknowledged; whoſe perſon, underſtanding, and diſpoſition, are of the firſt rate; and who diſtinguiſhes me from all the reſt of my ſex.

I believe Mr. Lexington is not in deſpair that I have placed my fate in your hands, as I ſee no abatement in his ſpirits, or perceive any thing like diſcontent in his countenance. The Duke thanks me

ten

ten times in a minute, for what he calls my generous candour, that will not keep in ſuſpenſe the man who adores me. The Ducheſs embraces me, and ſays, I ſhall ſupply to her the place of a daughter: and for the laſt hour, we have talked of nothing but of our excurſion to Riverſdale, which they aſſure me ſhall be in leſs than a month. What a proſpect is this for your Mary! I verily believe, had a ſtranger come in upon us by ſurpriſe, it would have been difficult to decide which of our little party was the moſt happy, where all were ſuperlatively happy.

Lord Auberry, I ſuppoſe, has been giving himſelf airs about me; and my reaſons for thinking ſo are many: firſt, that when or wherever I meet him, which is almoſt every day, he looks as ſternly at me, as if I had injured him in a manner never to be forgiven. Have I injured Lord Auberry? Is it injury to pardon him, unaſked, the wrongs he has done me? Is it injury ſtill to wiſh for his happineſs

pineſs, who has attempted to deſtroy my peace? None of thoſe ſurely are offences. But perhaps he makes me accountable for the ſame opinions I once entertained of him, and chooſes to forget the radical cure his own conduct adminiſtered to my weakneſs. I have no doubt that he expected I ſhould exhauſt my whole life in performing funeral obſequies to the memory of his departed vows. Perhaps too, his vanity is piqued and himſelf injured, in his own opinion, in finding me a rational woman rather than a deſpairing, forſaken heroine. There are miſtakes which might eaſily be adjuſted, whenever his Lordſhip condeſcends to beſtow a moment's ſerious reflection on what he was, what he is, and what I am.

Had he never known the fountain from which I draw every right principle I poſſeſs; had he never known Lady Auberry, he *then* might be excuſed for ſuppoſing that when I was inſtructed to dance, play, and ſing; to draw, paint, and ſpeak the languages,

languages, my education was completed. How to diſtinguiſh between honour and diſhonour; how to be firm as well as yielding; how to be the guardian of my own repoſe, without knowing you, he might have imagined were the only leſſons omitted as unneceſſary, in forming the mind of a girl whoſe ſituation ſeemed to preclude her from inſult, and intitle her to reſpect.

Ah, how bleſſed is your Mary! Has not the horror of her fate been averted by your goodneſs, by your wiſdom? Precept, theory, example, all conſpired to impreſs thoſe characters on my mind, which, like divine taliſmans, have guarded it from falſe, from dangerous impreſſions, and enabled me not only to recal that partiality, which has been once miſplaced, but to preſent the moſt eſtimable of mankind with a heart as free from former prepoſſeſſion, as if it had never owned any other maſter than himſelf.

The

The manner in which this ſtrange Lord Auberry behaves, when we meet in public, is ſo unaccountable on the ſcore of wounded pride, and perhaps a wounded conſcience, as that he ſhould himſelf have been the perſon to announce to an inquiſitive world, on what footing he had been once received at Riverſdale. Who elſe could have told it? Not the Ducheſs or Lady Jane, I am ſure; and theſe were the only two perſons with whom I ever entruſted my confidence; yet I find it is as much known, as if it had appeared in a gazette extraordinary.

I cannot bear any thing that has the appearance of reſerve, where unreſerve is not only a debt, but a duty; I ſhall therefore deſire Lady Jane to explain the nature of my engagement to Lord Auberry, fully and clearly to Mr. Lexington; perhaps he may hear the reports which I am convinced are in circulation, and hear them told to my diſadvantage. But was I ſure they would never reach his ear, I would

would ſtill deal with the ſame openneſs, that hereafter the ſin of concealment may not riſe up againſt me as a ſubject of reproach.

The Duke, ſome days ago, talked to me of Lord Auberry. His enquiries had no ſingularity in their tendency, and yet I thought he made them with a degree of anxiety that almoſt perſuaded me he was more than commonly intereſted about my former acquaintance with his Lordſhip. But after all, it is very likely theſe ideas of mine are merely chimerical; for his Grace has never ſpoken of him once ſince that time; and neither he or the Ducheſs, I am pretty well convinced, know half ſo much of what is whiſpered about in their own circle as I do.

The firſt indication I had of Lord Auberry's imprudence, in making me the ſubject of converſation on his own account, I received from Mrs. Oxburn, who, looking me confidently in the face, aſked with a malicious ſmile, how it happened

pened that I did not make my couſin take more care of his perſon: for of all things, added ſhe, I hate a ſloven.

I never before heard him accuſed, ſaid I, of negligence; nor do I ſuſpect Mrs. Oxburn of poſſeſſing that troubleſome ſort of *mauvais honte*, which would prevent her from making the application to *himſelf*, if ſhe ſaw any thing that diſpleaſed her in the dreſs or addreſs of Sir Aſhton Montague.

Oh, my dear, replied the confident creature, pretending to laugh at my miſapprehending her, you are prodigious wiſe, or prodigious artful, not to underſtand that I mean Lord Auberry.

It might be one or the other, it is a matter of perfect indifference to me, I replied, (vexed to death at her impertinence) I know ſo little of either.

Huſh, child, cried ſhe, laying her hand on my lips, don't throw away a buſhel of lies when one truth will do as well: and ſo, my little innocent rural dear, you know nothing of the poor diſconſolate Auberry;

Auberry; upon my life you are too cruel by half; if he ſhould hang himſelf, how will you like to be viſited by his ghoſt at midnight?

Your accuſation, and your aſſertion, Madam, are both very extraordinary; I muſt ſuppoſe them founded on ſome ſort of authority, or that your imagination is even more fertile than your wit is either pointed or brilliant.

I ſaid this in a tone of diſpleaſure bordering on ridicule; but ſhe took no notice of my ill-humour, and replied (laughing louder than before), Yes, yes, Miſs Montague, my authority is quite as good as if I had been admitted to your little ſnug party at Riverſdale two years ago; for though I am not prude enough to be flattered with your ſentimental confidence, there are others who may think me worthy to keep their ſecrets.

More and more provoked, particularly to be made the ſubject of ſatire by means of Lord Auberry, I anſwered, I have no ſecrets,

ſecrets, madam; or if I had, the ſpecimen you give of your qualifications to be the keeper of them, would certainly not encourage me to lodge them with you for ſecurity. But, perhaps, I added, the perſon who brought you the information may alſo have commiſſioned you to inſult me; if ſo, the offence you commit is only againſt good manners, and a breach of truſt may be quite out of the queſtion.

I turned from her in reſentment, and ſince that time I do not think we have ſpoken three words together.

This is not the only mortification I have met with on the ſame ſcore; for though Lord Auberry continues to treat me with as little conſideration as I beſtow on him, I can ſee plainly enough that it is pretty generally ſuppoſed we are ſtill attached to each other. It has happened more than once, that when his Lordſhip and Mr. Lexington were both near me, I have been aſked, *Which is the man?* Not Lord Auberry, I could have anſwered with cer-

tainty; but my union, whenever it takes place with Mr. Lexington, will, I hope, remove from the open-eyed world an error that does me no honour, and will be of very little credit to the character of my noble relation, at leaſt if ſteadineſs of principle is conſidered as neceſſary to the reputation of a fine gentleman.

On the firſt night of my going to the Opera, I mentioned my ſurpriſe at two glaſſes that were levelled at me from an oppoſite box; and that this circumſtance made ſuch a deep impreſſion on my memory, as to occaſion a very frightful dream, or rather viſion, in which I fancied myſelf a martyr to aſſaſſins of my own ſex. Theſe ladies, who were then the objects of my terror, are ſince numbered with thoſe who profeſs themſelves to be my friends.

What reaſon I have to doubt the reality of theſe flattering profeſſions I am going to tell you, but muſt firſt explain who they are, and who they belong to.

They

They are not ladies of title, but Hon. Miſſes. Their father is of a new creation; remarkably good and kind to me wherever he ſees me: indeed, he ſeems to profeſs univerſal philanthropy, and I am not a little proud of being his acknowledged favourite. Such is Lord Dawn. He is, I am told, the beſt family man in the world; he adores his Lady, and is the moſt indulgent of fathers. Lady Dawn, though the mother of a grown-up family, has many perſonal advantages over her daughters; ſhe is ſtill beautiful; they are plain; ſhe has a faſcinating ſoftneſs in the tones of her voice; all her movements are eaſy, natural, and graceful; the young ladies are maſculine, intrepid, and affected. Dear Grandmama, do not accuſe me of injuſtice, or ill-nature, in giving you this deſcription of the Miſs Dawns; they hate me, and I have a right to give you my opinion of them; I overheard them not three nights ago uſing my name with more freedom than truth or reſpect.

Lord Elderton, with whom Miſs Dawn has taken indefatigable pains to make it be believed that he is the captive either of her charms or her fortune, ſaid to me, when their corner converſation was ended (to which, he confeſſed, he had been liſtening with attention), What powers, what accompliſhments, what virtues muſt that woman poſſeſs, who can ſupply a magnet to a dozen of her own beautiful ſex, ſtrong enough to reduce them from their unceaſing work of captivation, and make them forget, that, whilſt they impannel their heads like a jury, giving verdict againſt a more lovely thief than themſelves, they are loſing the precious moments of conqueſt! How happens it, charming Miſs Montague, that you are never to be met with in thoſe good-natured *retiring* parties?

Fully underſtanding his Lordſhip's inuendo from what I had heard myſelf, though he was too polite to tell me abſolutely that I had been the ſubject of their

their converſation, I replied with a ſmile, it is becauſe one's name, on ſome occaſions, may contribute more to the amuſement of theſe ſelect parties than one's preſence. If we were all devourers, where would be the food for ſcandal?

My hair is finiſhed; but of what my head-dreſs, or the habit I am to appear in is to be compoſed, I cannot tell you, becauſe I do not yet know myſelf. I have entreated, with my own whole little ſtock of eloquence, the Duke and Mr. Lexington have added all their force to ſtrengthen my petition, the purport of which was, that this being my firſt maſquerade exhibition, I may be indulged with wearing a domino.

A mitigation of that ſentence, which had before condemned me to ſuſtain a character, was all that could be obtained; and her Grace ſaid ſhe would think of ſome fancy dreſs, in which I ſhould be as little incommoded as if I was to hide myſelf in a domino; but ſhe had no notion

of permitting young people belonging to her to make themſelves dowdies at any time, particularly on her own night. She deſired I would have my hair dreſſed before dinner; and when it was time to put on my habit in the evening, it ſhould be done in her apartment, that nobody but herſelf may know under what diſguiſe to find me. If Lexington, continued ſhe with much good humour, fails to diſtinguiſh you through all diſguiſes, we will give him no aſſiſtance, and he muſt loſe the opportunity of entertaining you, which will be his puniſhment for wanting the keen-ſightedneſs of a lover.

The laſt bell has rung—I have only time to wipe the powder from my face, before I go down.—Yes, but I muſt tell you that I ſaw an advertiſement in the newſpaper yeſterday, offering twenty guineas for a ticket of admittance to her Grace's maſquerade; the ticket to be left, and the money paid at the bar of ſome coffee-houſe, I forget where. There are above eight

eight hundred already iſſued; but the Ducheſs, ſuppoſing the perſon who was inclined to give ſo large a ſum to obtain a ſingle ticket muſt be a man of rank, whoſe name was not on her viſiting book, has ordered one to be ſent to the appointed place, with particular directions to the ſervant who carried it, that no money was to be taken by him as a gratuity, or any queſtions aſked; a ſpecimen this, not only of her politeneſs, but of that marked and liberal attention, with which ſhe is always diſpoſed to conſider ſtrangers.

Feb. 29th.

The friendly pillow of repoſe did not receive on its ſoft boſom the half-diſtracted head of your Mary till the clock had ſtruck ſix this morning, ſince which I have ſlept four hours, though not undiſturbed; even buſy fancy renewed the ſcene I had

ſo lately quitted. But what became of thoſe delightful dreams which, in moments of tranquil reſt, have ſo often tranſported me to Riverſdale, and reſtored me for whole nights together to the ſociety of its beloved inhabitants? Theſe ſweet images were all driven from my fatigued imagination: to them have ſucceeded phantoms of diſtorted and unnatural figures, that, whether ſleeping or waking, muſt ever create horror, if not diſguſt.

It is wonderful! how can I account for it? that though the ſleep I have enjoyed was diſturbed, broken, and agitating, yet I am as much refreſhed, now that I am riſen, as if I had ſlept twelve hours: neither head-ach or ennui have I to complain of; my getting up ſo early this morning is a proof of my health; and to aſcertain the good condition of my ſpirits, I am about to give a detail of all that I can remember of yeſterday's tranſactions. The ſcene of confuſion is no more before my aching eyes; and now that I am got

out

out of it, I ſhall feel much more pleaſure as a mere relator, than I could poſſibly participate of as an oſtenſible actor.

Dinner was ſerved up in the Duke's ſmall cabinet, which ſeems to be the only corner in the whole houſe reſerved for the purpoſe of comfort; every other apartment being laid out for the reception of ſplendour, and her train of ſatellites.

This dear little room had a particular claim on my affections, when I compared it with its more auguſt neighbours; it was that ſort of claim, which an unaſſuming child would have on my heart, if I ſaw her ſiſters careſſed, loaded with favours and finery, whilſt ſhe modeſtly retired from the gaze of admiration unnoticed, unthought of, deſpiſed, and neglected.

Our repaſt was in ſtyle with the apartment in which we aſſembled. The only viſitor who joined us there was Mr. Lexington; the attendants two, inſtead of twenty; we could not admit more without incommoding ourſelves: ſhort courſes, a

deſert in miniature, much eaſe, much good humour, and much happineſs, was the reſult of the whole *petite arrangement.*

We did not ſeparate till near nine o'clock; the doors were to open at eleven; Mr. Lexington went home to dreſs; when her Grace took me to her bed-chamber: that too was laid out for company, the bed being placed behind the arras of white ſattin, which was ſo contrived as to leave a ſpace ſufficient for the buſineſs of the toilet; and here it was that we retired to put on our habits. The Ducheſs ſtopped in her way to adjuſt ſomething that caught her eye in the ornaments as ſhe paſſed by them, bidding me go forward, and not attend to what *ſhe* was about.

Mr. Lexington, at the requeſt of the Duke, had given us ſeveral ſongs after dinner. You know, dear Grandmama, I have no notion in the world of turning a tune, but when the Ducheſs bade me go on before her, forgetting my own inability, I tried to ſing, or rather did moſt completely

pletely murder, a very pretty air beginning thus:

"If 'tis joy to wound a lover,
"How much more to give him eaſe!"

the tune and words of which had both infinitely pleaſed me; when, in the very act of maſſacre, entering her Grace's bedchamber, I uttered a faint ſcream, and thought I ſhould have fainted. It is impoſſible I ſhould tell you what ſort of emotion I felt, when I ſaw ſitting up juſt within the door a maſked figure, dreſſed all in black.

Lady Jane Petworth, for it was her whoſe preſence had thrown me into this ſudden conſternation, flew towards me, and ſaid (taking off her maſk), My dear child, what is it that alarms you? Did you not expect to find me here? Surely the Ducheſs muſt have told you that I came ſo early in conſequence of a meſſage from her, and at her own requeſt.

I did not know a word of the matter, I replied; and never before having ſeen any body ſo diſguiſed, I was frightened almoſt out of my ſenſes. But deareſt Lady Jane, rejoiced as I am to be ſo agreeably ſurpriſed, I have ſtill a little part of my mind occupied by curioſity, to find out why the Ducheſs ſent for you to come ſo ſoon.

That will eaſily be explained, I dare ſay, my ſweet Mary, ſaid ſhe, I ſuppoſe it is to tell me what I have already heard from the tranſported Lexington, of your having made him the happieſt of mankind.

Huſh! cried I, for Heaven's ſake!—There was not time for another word—Her Grace came into the room; I heard her cough, which made me give her the caution of ſilence. She took Lady Jane under the arm, pretended to lead her through the other apartments, as if to aſk her opinion on their decorations, but I rather think it was to acquaint her with my good fortune.

They

They were abſent about ten minutes, and when they came back, we all retired behind the ſcenes, for ſo I think the receptacle for our toilets might be properly called, where our women, I mean two of the Ducheſs's, and my poor Jenny, waited to put on our habits.

Jenny would certainly have been as great a fool as her miſtreſs, and ſcreamed at ſight of Lady Jane, who, at my requeſt, had replaced the maſk on her face, if the preſence of my Lady Ducheſs, whom every body ſeems afraid of, had not been a reſtraint on her terrors.

I can now laugh at my own fears, as well as at her's, for after all there was nothing very formidable in her Ladyſhip's appearance; ſhe only repreſented a lady abbeſs, and had taken the character, ſhe ſaid, at the requeſt of Miſs Forteſcue, who, with her two couſins, Lady Bell and Lady Bridget Langton, beſides three or four more of their young friends, were to form a groupe of nuns, and to be left under her

care

care by the Marchioneſs of Stars, who, being an invalid, propoſed returning home at an early hour.

I do not underſtand, replied the Ducheſs, what buſineſs her High Mightineſs has to come out at all? we can do extremely well without her; ſhe had better not trouble other people with her made-up maladies; a maſquerade is no nurſery for ſick folks. God forgive me, but I have hardly Chriſtian charity for that diſcontented old Queen of Scraps, or her envious daughters. I have provided a ſtrong maſk for Miſs Montague, or her eyes might be in danger, ſhould they diſcover which way Lexington's are directed. My deep-diving Lady Marchioneſs has been in purſuit of him for a ſon-in-law before her girls were out of their leaders, though, poor things, they have been quite as induſtrious as their mother ſince they came to the years of *diſcretion*, if any ſuch time is marked on our preſent faſhionable calendar. But come, added her Grace, getting

ting up from the ſide of the bed, where ſhe had ſeated herſelf, let us begin to think of making ourſelves ready.

I ventured to wiſh my dreſs might not be *very* fine, or very fantaſtical; and the Ducheſs, who is now always in good humour with me, was not diſpleaſed with my freedom, but bid me be quite at eaſe on that ſcore, for as ſoon as ſhe diſcovered my ſtrong predilection for a domino, ſhe had dropped, ſhe ſaid, her own idea in conformity to my taſte, and only carried on the deception merely to puzzle her nephew, to whom ſhe had hinted I ſhould be the *very fineſt* maſk of the night.

It is probable, continued her Grace, that by ſending him on a falſe purſuit, thoſe tender things he means only for you, will be addreſſed to ſome Sultana, or Perſian Princeſs, or perhaps to more than a ſcore, who he may ſuppoſe to come under my vague deſcription; ſo that, inſtead of poſſeſſing the happineſs he is running after, in the very act of ſeeking it he will chance

chance to beſtow his tender ſpeeches on many a ſelf-created divinity, whoſe ſhrines are always prepared for the offerings of young men's prayers and praiſes.

But I hope you will let me be known to the Duke, ſaid I?

Either Lexington is much obliged to you, or you are the worſt of all plotters, ſhe replied; it would be a mighty wiſe manœuvre indeed, to tell the Duke.—No—had I entruſted the one with my ſecret, I might have as well revealed it to the other; and, for want of management, a very good jeſt would have been totally ſpoiled.

I did not ſay another word, for fear her hint about Mr. Lexington might be carried further, and ſhe might really ſuppoſe I wiſhed to reveal myſelf to him by means of the Duke: but delighted beyond all expreſſion at her Grace's condeſcenſion, in permitting me to wear a domino, I ſat down with joyful alacrity to have the form of my hair changed from what it had been

at

at dinner, becauſe it was obſerved by the Ducheſs that then Mr. Lexington examined it with marked attention, as if he had hopes of finding me out by the manner in which it was pinned up, or the ſhape of a curl. My domino was pale green trimmed with white, the leaſt remarkable colour, ſhe ſaid, and what there would be more of that night than of any other.

On my expreſſing a wiſh, if poſſible, to find out what would be the dreſs of Mr. Lexington, Lady Jane ſaid, ſhe knew he had fixed on the character of a Barriſter; for when he called upon her yeſterday, finding ſhe was engaged with her lawyer, he had bid her reſerve all the queſtions ſhe meant for Counſel till this evening, when he might be heard of in Groſvenor Square, where he ſhould attend for the benefit of clients, and give his opinions gratis.

Our dreſſes were on in a moment. Never did I paſs two more agreeable hours than thoſe before the company began to aſſemble. How very charming the Ducheſs

cheſs can be when ſhe pleaſes. I received my directions how to conduct myſelf, and amongſt a thouſand other charges, ſhe forbade me from ſpeaking to her, at leaſt for the firſt two hours; for, ſaid ſhe, if you are often coming up to me, and ſticking yourſelf at my ſide, Lexington will ſoon enough diſcover you; neither was I to hang about Lady Jane, that would anſwer the ſame end. There was no poſſibility of harm happening to me in her houſe, I muſt therefore take my chance, and mix with the multitude.

Another of her Grace's contrivances to prevent me from being known, was, that inſtead of waiting in any of the rooms to ſhew I belonged to the family, Lady Jane ſhould conduct me by a back way, which led from behind the arras to the entrance hall, where I might mix with an hundred other maſks, who would be ruſhing in at the ſame time.

Beſides all theſe precautions, there was another which I have not yet mentioned; this

this was a large bead faſtened to the maſk, which bead I was made to hold in my mouth, and it altered my voice moſt effectually, which otherwiſe, ſhe ſaid, muſt betray me, for ſhe was ſure I ſhould not long give myſelf the trouble to diſguiſe it.

Looking on the quantity of paper I have already ſcribbled, and thinking how much more I have ſtill to cover, I aſk myſelf thoſe two natural queſtions, Will not my readers at Riverſdale yawn over ſo much of it?—Shall I have time to finiſh before I go down to breakfaſt?—My heart gives a negative to the firſt, and my watch inſtructs me that I have yet an hour and half unexpended, ſo I hope to conclude my long hiſtory in time to carry it with me; and when I have got the Duke to give it a free paſſport, I ſhall ſend it off, as I am ſure the immoderate ſize to which it will then be increaſed muſt preclude the neceſſity of its being detained for a companion.

Her

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Her

Her Grace of Cleveland appeared unmaſked in the reception room on the firſt annunciation of arrivals, but we remained behind long after ſhe was gone; and at laſt, when we introduced ourſelves, it was in the manner ſhe had appointed, and we mingled in the hall with at leaſt thirty of the moſt groteſque figures the human imagination can depicture.

The firſt idea that took poſſeſſion of my diſtracted brain on ſeeing forms ſo unnatural, on hearing ſounds ſo incomprehenſible, muſt, I ſhould ſuppoſe, reſemble the feelings of a perſon thrown on a deſolate iſland, who, in a moment, finds that he is ſurrounded by all its ſavage and monſtrous inhabitants.

Lady Jane quitted me as ſoon as we had ruſhed in with the multitude, and in loſing ſight of her, my terrors became almoſt inſupportable. I ſaw nothing but eyes—eyes that glared upon me like burning meteors;—ſome appeared to ſcowl with

with contempt, ſome to threaten miſchief, and all had to me the expreſſion of ineffable horror.

In vain I attempt to deſcribe my ſenſations; for ten minutes they were undeſcribable. The firſt friendly circumſtance, by which I was rouſed to ſome degree of reflection, that told me theſe were all rational beings, and that my fears were ridiculous, was Mrs. Tovey—*charming! charming!*—who was haranguing a party at no great diſtance from me. She was talking in her own natural voice, which, on this one occaſion, ſounded ſweeter to my ears than ſounds the Shepherds pipe in the valley of echo.

Encouraged by knowing, and being known to a perſon ſo near me, I crept ſtill nearer; and though I did not yet venture to ſpeak, I liſtened with attention, and heard her ſay, in continuation of ſomething ſhe had been ſaying before—

My Lady told me ſhe ſhould come; but my Lord will not riſe till late—don't you know

know this is the day on which he is to make his very beſt ſpeech? And ſo you muſt not expect to ſee my Lady here, till my Lord comes with her.——But where is the poor dear Ducheſs?—Well, to be ſure, this is the fineſt aſſembly! the lights are ſo becoming!——I muſt go and find out her Grace. — Every thing in ſuch taſte!—Well, it is charming! and ſo like the Ducheſs and Miſs Montague—Where is Miſs Montague?---With her Grace to be ſure.

And away ſhe niggled.

I wiſh *I* could be ſure of *that*, ſaid a voice from behind me, I have been ranging the rooms this hour, and will ſwear there is no Miſs Montague with the Ducheſs of Cleveland, unleſs ſhe has made it a point to hide her underſtanding, as well as her countenance.

Perhaps ſhe has none to hide, ſaid I, plucking up courage, on ſeeing it was only a domino that I was to encounter; but frightened at the ſound of my own voice, I did

I did not wait for an anſwer, getting off as far and as faſt as I could, from the perſon to whom my obſervation ſeemed a ſort of challenge to begin a converſation: and, at the moment, I was half reſolved not to utter another ſyllable the reſt of the evening. At this time the rooms were not full, the doors had not been open more than half an hour, and few characters had yet made their appearance.

I looked about me, in hopes to find out Mr. Lexington, under his lawyer's gown and immenſe wig; but, though I could not diſcover him, I ſaw the Duke of Cleveland ſitting down, his face uncovered, and in his uſual dreſs. A number of people ſtopped in their various purſuits to pay him a ſhort compliment, and then paſſed on without further incommoding him.

What a ſight was this! What a reſt would it have been to my fluttering heart and agitated ſpirits, if he did but know that I was ſo near him! I could have flown

flown to him—I could have ſaid, dear Duke, take me under your protection—the Ducheſs drives me from her—Lady Jane abandons me—every body ſhe wiſhes attached to her, have deſerted your poor Mary!

The ſerenity and ſweetneſs of his features, invited me ſo kindly to put myſelf under his guardianſhip, that I felt inclined to riſk her Grace's diſpleaſure, by committing a wilful act of diſobedience; but, being hindred in my approach towards him, by the current which bore ſtrongly that way, I had time to conſider what I was going to do; and, convinced that it muſt be a long while, if ever, before her Grace would forgive my neglect of orders, I changed my plan, and inſtead of betraying myſelf to the Duke, I was content to take the vacant ſeat on the ſame ſofa he occupied.

I conſidered my preſent ſituation as a ſchool, in which I might receive the firſt rudiments of maſquerade education; for,

as

as I could feel no reſtraint in ſpeaking to the Duke, I thought it was not impoſſible, after ſuch a training, but before the evening was over I might be able to anſwer, or even to aſk a queſtion, without being thrown into the ſhivering fit of an ague, ſomething like which I had experienced on my firſt effort of eloquence.

In ſumming up the advantages likely to occur from my neighbourhood, I had forgot one very eſſential bar to the progreſs of my improvement; I might indeed have talked as much as I pleaſed to the Duke, but poor dear man, I ſhould have remembered that he would never have enriched my fund of knowledge by any remarks of his own; for at all times if he happens to be forced into converſation with ſtrangers, ſuch efforts are ever attended with diſappointment to them, and pain to himſelf, from the invincible reſerve of his diſpoſition: he was always diſpoſed to liſten, but I muſt have made myſelf known to him before I could hope to receive a reply

that would conſiſt of more than a ſmiling affirmative, or a quiet negative.

I poſſeſſed my new poſt with abundant eaſe and ſatisfaction to my own feelings; I ſoon recovered my ſpeech, and uſed it to ſo much purpoſe, that the dear Duke began to ſhew ſymptoms of wearineſs at my flippancy; for having no fears in whatever I ſaid to him, I chattered away till, by his frequent yawnings, ſhort anſwers, and half-cloſed eye-lids, I ſaw plainly that I ſhould ſoon drive him out of his peaceful quarter.

Already he had wriggled as far from me as he could, and was drawn to the very brink of the ſofa, from whence I expected to ſee him decamp at the firſt momentary interval of ſilence I might have inadvertently given him to cover his retreat; for though he wiſhed to get rid of me, he was too polite to quit his ſtation, whilſt one queſtion ſucceeded to another as faſt as I could utter them.

This

This little playful manœuvring had a good effect on my courage. I thought all my difficulties were fairly got over, and now I rather wiſhed to be ſpoken to than to retire from obſervation; when, on the moment I was congratulating myſelf on my acquiſition of ſpirit, a maſk, in a blue domino, came up to the Duke, and, taking him by the arm, drew him away a few paces, but not ſo far as to throw me at a greater diſtance than I could conveniently hear what was paſſing between them.

I ſoon diſcovered, that this new acquiſition to our *tete-a-tete* party, was no other than Mr. Lexington, who, in his own voice, complained bitterly that he could no where find me out, or prevail on the Ducheſs to give him the ſmalleſt hint to aſſiſt his reſearches. Is it poſſible, ſaid he, that your Grace can be quite as much in the dark as I am?

It is, upon my honour, or I would have told you long ago, returned the

Duke. However, added he, in a lower key, ſet yourſelf down patiently, *if* you can, by the maſk I have eſcaped from, whoſe eternal tongue has ſufficiently done me up, whilſt I go and try what is to be made of your Aunt; perhaps ſhe may tell me the ſecret ſhe will not diſcloſe to you; therefore, let me find you here at my return.

The Duke went off, and Mr. Lexington took the place he had quitted, but did not ſeem to think it incumbent on him that he ſhould contribute to my entertainment, any more than my former companion.

He had thrown his head againſt the back of the ſofa, and was fallen into the profoundeſt train of meditation, from which he ſtarted, on my venturing to aſk him if he did not think a maſquerade the moſt charming of all amuſements?

No, faith, he replied, I have not found it ſo charming as you think it: but now that I am rouſed by your ſweet tones, I expect

pect to change my opinion—The Duke of Cleveland has juſt been ſaying to me, you are the beſt companion in the world.

Aye, retorted I, you ſay true, for I overheard the very words in which this very flattering compliment to my poor talents was delivered to you by his Grace.

The devil you did—Why then, Madam, ſince that is the caſe, we will, if you pleaſe, ſay no more on the ſubject.

I am not in the leaſt offended—but ſuppoſe then we talk of Miſs Montague.

Miſs Montague!—Direct me where to find her, and I will worſhip you as a divinity.

I certainly think I am able to direct you, if the Duke ſhould be as unſucceſsful a ſupplicant to the Ducheſs as yourſelf; but you muſt remember his Grace's injunctions, and not ſtir from my ſide till he brings you back the event of his embaſſy.—I ſubmit to aſſiſt you on no other condition.

He made me no immediate reply, and I

ſaw him examine my hair with ſo much accuracy, that I rejoiced the form of it had been changed from what it was when I ſat down to dinner; it was then curled and pinned up; it was now without curl, and ſpread over my ſhoulders; and yet when I ſaw the ſtrictneſs of his ſcrutiny, I trembled, and felt very aukward from the idea that he had gueſſed too well for my imaginary ſecurity. Reſolved to know my doom, whether I was or was not detected, I aſked if there was any thing very peculiar in the conſtruction of my head-dreſs, becauſe I could not but remark he paid more attention to that than to the obliging offers I had made to direct him where he might find Miſs Montague.

I had a momentary ſuſpicion, ſaid he, but it is gone. You *are* acquainted then with Miſs Montague—*perhaps* you are Lady Jane Petworth?

And ſuppoſe I was Lady Jane, what would you ſay to me?

Oh!

Oh! ſaid he, I would talk to you of my adorable Mary! And if you knew under what maſk ſhe is to be found, I would drag you from room to room till you had brought me to her. He had got on his feet, caught hold of my hand, and was nearly going to do what he had threatened.

You are miſtaken, Sir, I am not Lady Jane Petworth. I withdrew my hand, and was again re-ſeated.

I will go, cried he impatiently, and ſee what is become of the Duke. If he does not ſucceed with the Ducheſs, remember I am to gain my information from you.

O! to be ſure, ſaid I, and I ſhall wait till you come back; or if, in the meantime, I ſhould happen to change my ſituation, I would adviſe you to look for Miſs Montague under a religious habit.

You muſt be in the right, he replied; and none but a blockhead, like myſelf, would have been deceived ſo long. I deſerve my puniſhment, and will try to retrieve my error.

I ſaw Lady Jane coming towards me, as he mingled with the crowd. We were rejoiced to meet, though but for a moment. I told her what had paſſed, and that Mr. Lexington would, probably, take her in the road of his purſuit.

We ſpoke very low, and it was a fortunate circumſtance that we did ſo; for, more than once, ſhe ſo far forgot herſelf as to call me Miſs Montague; and every part of the houſe was, by this time, ſo ſtuffed with liſteners and ſpectators, that ſome of them muſt have caught the ſound, had it been above the compaſs of a whiſper.

Before I parted with Lady Jane, I aſked if ſhe did not think it was proper that I ſhould go and ſhew myſelf to the Ducheſs? but ſhe adviſed me to defer my intentions a little longer. When we ſeparated, I did not go back to the Duke's ſofa, but walked from room to room; and, at laſt, ſat down in one, the fartheſt from that I had come from.

In

In my promenade, I paſſed the Ducheſs of Cleveland—it was by mere accident ſhe did not let me go by her unnoticed—I ſlid my hand into her's—ſhe preſſed it affectionately; and, putting her face cloſe to my ear, you are a charming girl, whiſpered ſhe; I have had the beſt poſſible accounts of you, both from the Duke and Lexington; I am enchanted with you; keep up the ball; preſerve our ſecret, and leave me as faſt as you can.

I am now arriving at an incident, which I think was the moſt remarkable of any that occurred, from the beginning to the end of this, to me, ſtrange and wonderful evening——I have ſaid nothing of the characters, which were in a very ſmall proportion ſcattered through the immenſe multitude of dominos, that prevailed in every apartment.—I do not paſs them over in ſilence becauſe I think them unworthy your notice, but, becauſe I really did not underſtand them: yet, there was one my heart acknowledged, who, though only

in appearance the child of poverty, ſeemed to have more than imaginary claims on my compaſſion.

The heroine of my tale was a poor old beggar, in whoſe appearance famine and wretchedneſs, of every deſcription, were ſo ſtrongly perſonified, that from the mere force of imagination, I could have wept over them: when ſhe aſked alms, it was not in the accents of importunity, but in the pathetic tones of graceful perſuaſion.

She had followed me—I had ſpoken to her, as if ſhe really was what ſhe only repreſented; and had ſhe choſe to accept the whole contents of my purſe, they would certainly have been her own; as I *really* was fool enough to offer them with the moſt *ſerious* intentions.

This ingenuous confeſſion of my ſimplicity, I hope will make my dear Grandmama ſmile; and if Miſs Beauly, who is ſo much better acquainted with the world than I am, ſhould laugh at ſuch a proof of credulity and ſimpleneſs, her mirth will

not

not be of that ſort which I unfortunately excited in ſome lady-maſks, who had made themſelves ſpectators of my ridiculous wanderings.

This venerable figure did not ceaſe to follow me, from the time I had ſhewn how eaſily I was to be made the dupe of fiction; particularly whilſt Lady Jane Petworth talked to me, ſhe was ſtanding ſo very near, that I felt her preſs againſt my arm, to which ſituation I ſuppoſed ſhe had been driven by the ſurrounding concourſe. Again, when I had parted from the Ducheſs, and was retired to a diſtant room, I ſtill found the ſame pity-moving object at my elbow.

I invited her to ſit down by me.

You are all ſweetneſs, all condeſcenſion! ſaid ſhe, taking the ſeat I offered her. Ah, how amiable, how worthy to be adored is Miſs Montague!

I was, as you may conceive, ſtruck with amazement. I haſtily aſked how ſhe came to diſcover me, and whether I had the

honour of being particularly known to her, that ſhe could ſo readily penetrate through a diſguiſe which had baffled the enquiries of all other eyes but her own?

My aſtoniſhment increaſed, when ſhe replied, No, Madam, I have never ſeen your face; and it was by accident I heard your name pronounced a few minutes ago, by a Lady Abbeſs, to whom you was ſpeaking. I was firſt attracted towards you becauſe, from your evident diſinclination to join in the riotous confuſion going forwards, I thought you ſome neglected, ſolitary being, like myſelf, *unknowing* and *unknown.*

And is it poſſible this can be your caſe, Madam?

Nothing is more certain—there is but one perſon, in all this aſſemblage of ſplendor and happineſs, whom I know; and even by that *one* my preſence, in this country, is unſuſpected: I may therefore ſay, that to *him* alſo I am unknown.

The

The ſtrange viſitor, who came to the Ducheſs ſo privately, and made me the ſubject of her myſterious enquiries, ruſhed on my memory, and I cried have you never been in this houſe before?

How ſeldom, ſhe cried, does the path of wretched wanderers lead through the flowery paſtures of greatneſs!—The ſteps of miſery are difficult to trace, and few there are who are diſpoſed to mark them.

I beg your pardon, ſaid I, and I confeſs my ſtupidity. This is the ſecond time I have complimented the ſpirit and propriety with which you have ſupported your aſſumed character. Your poverty would have made me your benefactreſs, and your exquiſite repreſentation of wretchedneſs, would have cheated me of my tears. I admire your talents, but rejoice infinitely more, that all you have been making me ſuffer is only the work of fiction.

Fiction!—of fiction! repeated ſhe, in a quick tone. Oh, bleſſed virgin! if my woes are not real, what is reality!

I looked

I looked up at this exclamation—her eyes were ſwimming in ſorrow, and her boſom heaving with ſtrong emotions!

From that moment I began to ſuſpect the poor creature's head was diſordered—You know what a coward I am; and my terror was ſo great, that I thought of nothing but how to get away without alarming or offending her.

Had we not better, ſaid I, walk about and endeavour to diveſt ourſelves of the melancholy impreſſions to which we are yielding with too little oppoſition?

I would, by no means, returned the maſk, prevent Miſs Montague from ſeeking thoſe pleaſures *ſhe* is formed to embelliſh as well as to enjoy. I am totally eſtranged from pleaſure; but though my ears are cloſed to all ſounds of joy, whilſt converſing with you I have felt that my mind is not quite inſenſible to ſome ſort of relief.——Adieu, too much beloved, too charming Miſs Montague!—I have no right to detain you.

This

This was not the language of inſanity. I again thought of the foreign Lady. The accents and the muſical tones of my companion, reminded me more ſtrongly of the Ducheſs's deſcription. I re-conſidered the anſwers ſhe had returned to my former queſtions, and it now appeared rather as an evaſive aſſent, than a decided negative.

You do not think me intitled, Madam, to the honour of your confidence, ſaid I, taking her hand and re-placing her, for ſhe had riſen up to go from me, or you would have the goodneſs to tell me whether you have ever had a private interview in this houſe, with the miſtreſs of it; or whether I am miſtaken in the perſon whom I ſuppoſe you to be.

And who is it you ſuppoſe me to be?

A lovely woman, and a foreigner, one who, ſome weeks ago, ſeemed to intereſt herſelf in my fate.

Huſh! my dear Miſs Montague, you are too well informed, and I am covered with confuſion!

But

But will you not tell me from what motive I became the ſubject of your enquiries?

I fear, ſaid ſhe, graſping my hand, whilſt her own trembled with agitation, and her voice became almoſt inarticulate, I fear there is a *fatal* ſympathy that involves *our* deſtiny—if *you* are happy, I *muſt* be miſerable—if I am *bleſſed*, it is you who *muſt* be the victim of misfortune.

My God! thought I, ſurely the ſolution of this enigma muſt belong to Lord Auberry! And I replied, with unſtudied compoſure, No, Madam, the fate you apprehend never can happen—our intereſt or our affections never can interfere.

If you would have me believe this to be poſſible, tell me, (in the name of Heaven do not hold me in the tortures of ſuſpenſe!) was not the maſk, who ſat by you on the ſofa,—was it not Lord----She could ſay no more.

Be aſſured, Madam, it was not Lord Auberry; or, if it had been him, what

are

are the conſequences you have to fear on my account.

All, every thing that is moſt dreadful—oh, you do not know the cruelty of my ſituation: I am the fatal, but innocent bar, that muſt ſeparate him from you for ever; ſhould he break it down, my fame, my peace, my exiſtence, are all buried in the ruins.

What frightful images are theſe? Spare yourſelf from deſtructive apprehenſions totally unfounded, whatever are your claims on Lord Auberry, I have no demands on him that can prevent their eſtabliſhment.

I know it, I know it, ſhe eagerly replied; your honour, your delicacy, your prudence, your compaſſion, are they not all the guardians of my fate? But what is there to guarantee on the part of Lord Auberry? He *may*, it is *poſſible* he may, be at liberty again to renew thoſe vows he forfeited in one unfaithful, unfortunate moment. Could you reject them now? could

you

you ſpurn from your feet the man, who for your ſake has plunged into premeditated guilt, and in the phrenzy of paſſion tramples on all ties that obſtruct his paſſage as a lover and a huſband? Yes, you would, I feel you would reject him; but great God, what then will become of Auberry!

Well, deareſt Grandmama, what is your opinion of this extraordinary woman? She is certainly the Wife or the Miſtreſs of Lord Auberry.—I heard long ago he had brought a beautiful woman with him from the Continent, and that ſhe lives here under his protection; and yet ſhe ſaid, (he) evidently meaning his Lordſhip, did not even ſuſpect that ſhe was in this country. Whatever may be the truth of this intricate buſineſs, I thought it a duty owing to myſelf, as well as to the pity I felt for her diſtreſs, to give her the moſt unequivocal aſſurances that my future proſpects of felicity had no ſort of reference to Lord Auberry, but depended altogether on another, who would receive my hand at the

the altar, and invariably poſſeſs my affections.

I ſhould have ſaid a great deal more, and have offered her my unlimited friendſhip to conſole or adviſe her; but though I was prepoſſeſſed beyond all deſcription in her favour, a certain degree of doubt hung upon my mind, which made me more guarded than I ſhould have been, had ſhe told me ſhe was the wife of Lord Auberry: *then* I ſhould have loved her; as it was, I could only pity, and even that cold ſentiment was allayed by ſuſpicion.

She penetrated to the very receſſes of my thoughts, and having thanked me for the confidence I had repoſed in her with that ſort of dignity which none, I think, but virtuous ſouls are capable of feeling, ſhe ſaid, you have perfectly ſatisfied *me*, Miſs Montague, but I perceive, with concern, you are not ſatisfied *with* me. I have been uſed to command—my natural diſpoſition is haughty—ſometimes imperious—judge then what muſt have been

my

my humiliation, not only to find *myſelf* a ſuppliant, but even to appear before you in a *doubtful* character; think as well of me as you can, theſe doubts ſhall be removed, *but* not yet—when you know me better, I will preſume to ſolicit a place in your friendſhip. I will remember your goodneſs every day, every hour, and your gentleneſs, till we meet again, ſhall be the mirror in which I will correct my own impetuoſity.

If this wonderful creature is the miſtreſs of Lord Auberry, where could he find ſophiſtry ſtrong enough to overturn the principles of a mind ſo great of underſtanding, ſo brilliant of dignity, ſo impreſſive? And if ſhe be his wife, how can he wiſh to abandon her? Moſt unaccountable man! with what joy would I congratulate him on the happineſs of his fate, with what affection *embrace* the lovely Foreigner, would he but preſent her to me as Lady Auberry!

My

My heart is warm towards her; ſhe *muſt* be innocent, ſhe cannot be unamiable.

I readily granted the requeſt which ſhe made with particular energy, to let what had paſſed between us reſt in ſilence. I do not wiſh you to forget it, ſaid ſhe, but it will be my ruin, ſhould it reach the ears of my ———ſhe pauſed—I verily believe ſhe was going to ſay Huſband; however, *my Lord* was the concluſion of her ſentence, and we ſeparated, but not till ſhe had reaſſured me, that though it was poſſible we might never meet more, I ſhould be informed of thoſe events, the explanation of which might give her a better title than ſhe had at preſent, to my good opinion.

Being once more left alone, I walked about from room to room and laughed immoderately under my maſk, to ſee how poor Mr. Lexington was fatiguing himſelf in the wrong purſuit on which I had ſent him. I ſaw the Duke near him, they often ſtood ſtill and talked together, when I ſup-

I ſuppoſed he was complaining of his ill-ſucceſs.

I watched my opportunity of following the Duke as he turned away from his diſconſolate Nephew—renewing my attack on the patience of this dear friend, I made myſelf, if poſſible, more troubleſome than before. I talked as faſt as I could, my voice was raiſed, my tones peremptory, my ſubjects ſuch, as I knew he was moſt averſe to. I profeſſed myſelf devoted to politics, criticiſed the ſpeeches of his favourite Speakers in the Houſe of Commons, praiſed thoſe he diſliked, abuſed Miniſters, gave my ſentiments with the gravity of a Senator, aſked his opinion with the flippancy of an aſſured Woman, and the pedantry of a learned one; then, without waiting for the information I required, I poured into his paſſive ears freſh vollies of mere ſounds, which had neither ſenſe or meaning. I had never ſeen his temper diſcompoſed, and was determined to try how

how long it would hold out againſt the fierce ſiege of folly, ignorance, and impertinence, with which I unceaſingly annoyed him.

He let me run on a conſiderable time without interruption; ſometimes he would ſmile, and at others ſpeak to any maſk who happened to paſs us, with the deſign, as I ſaw, of ſhaking me off, but I ſtuck ſo cloſe to his ſide, that it was impoſſible: at laſt, I had ſo far provoked him, as to draw from the reſervedeſt mind in the world this ſarcaſm:—he was ſorry to obſerve a Lady of my deep erudition had ſo few admirers in ſo large a circle, that he, who was the worſt judge in the world of my perfections, ſhould be the only man before whom I choſe to diſplay them.

It is, ſaid I, becauſe you are ſo good to give me your entire attention, and from your remarks I hope to gain much information.

The devil a remark have I made; your own, Madam, are ſo inceſſant, that you

you leave me no opportunity to make them.

Excuſe me, my Lord, I am ſure it muſt have been your own fault, for I am no great talker, and had you ſignified your intention to ſpeak, your Grace would ſoon have found out that I had no higher ambition than to be the moſt delighted of hearers; but will you lend me your ear only for one half hour, for there is ſomething in my Lord Stanhope's ſpeech laſt Thurſday, which I cannot for my life rightly underſtand—and I wiſh to know what explanation it is poſſible can be applied to it by wiſer heads than my own—ſhall we ſit down and try to puzzle it out? I am ſo happy to find you again after that cruel interruption at the beginning of the evening in the moſt intereſting converſation that ever was—there are our old ſeats ſtill vacant, pray let us take poſſeſſion of them.

Any ſeat, or every ſeat in this houſe, Madam, you are at liberty to occupy; but

tete-a-tetes

tete-a-tetes do not agree with my conſtitution; and as to lending you my ear any longer, faith, I cannot do that, for it is already worn out in your ſervice.

I was ſo much diverted with the victory obtained over his placidity, for now there was nothing like patience or forbearance in his clouded aſpect, that I fell into a violent fit of laughing; and, dropping the bead from my lips, which had, till then, diſguiſed my voice, he found me out in a moment.

Never was man more delighted, or woman more flattered, than we both were on this occaſion. I cannot tell you the joy with which his Grace recognized me, or the approbation he beſtowed on me for tormenting him.

He would have gone that moment to bring up Mr. Lexington, who, he told me, was in a ſtate of abſolute deſperation; and had quarrelled with the Ducheſs for keeping him ſo long in a ſtate of ſuſpenſe; beſides venting his rage on every maſk un-

der which he expected to find me. I have pitied his disappointments this whole night, said the Duke; he is really miserable, and you must allow me to point out his remedy.

I would by no means consent to the discovery, unless it was made with the Duchess's permission: and his Grace left me in order to obtain it.

Whilst I sat waiting his return, I saw Mr. Lexington, as I supposed, coming the opposite way from that taken by the Duke; and as he seemed to intend passing by without noticing me, I concluded he must be extremely angry at my having deceived him. A little bustle, occasioned by a character who had collected many people round him, made my blue domino halt just as he came near the sofa on which I was sitting; the mask was a Patagonian infant, six feet high, and the most noisy brat I ever heard—so thought the blue domino—who, without deigning to throw one look towards me, sat down by my side, muttering

muttering to himſelf, Damn'd ſtuff—infernal folly!

So prepoſſeſſed was I that this could be no other than Mr. Lexington, and ſo ready to charge myſelf both with his diſcontent and neglect, that, in hopes to reſtore his good humour, I aſked if he had found out Miſs Montague?

He ſtarted—looked round at me—and I thought his eyes flaſhed lightning, as he repeated the name of Montague---Miſs Montague!—have I found out Miſs Montague!—to whom am I indebted for this extraordinary queſtion?—and how have I the honour to be ſo well known to the enquirer, that ſo little ceremony is thought neceſſary?

He has forgot me, ſaid I, mentally, but I will give him a remembrancer.

Whoever I am, or whoever you are, I replied, is of no ſignification—ſhort memories are ſometimes convenient; and, if you chooſe to forget that we have met before, it may be more to my advantage than

if you were to remember how badly I have been ſerving you. But, pray tell me, have you met with her?

With whom?

Why, with your favourite Miſs Montague—perhaps I could have directed you better.——What in the world can you ſee in that uninformed country girl, to make yourſelf ſo ridiculous about her. A little bird has been whiſpering in my ear, that you are giving the world room to ſuppoſe you half frantic, in running after her who is determined you ſhall not find the *prodigious* felicity you are in purſuit of till ſhe pleaſes. Will you let me give you a word of friendly advice?

He remained ſullenly ſilent.

You do not forbid me—I will therefore, though my advice ſhould be obtruſive, venture to tell you, that you had better drop all thoughts of Miſs Montague; there are a thouſand other women more deſerving than ſhe is of your attention.

Think

Think what muſt have been my ſurpriſe when the maſk anſwered, in his own voice, and that voice I knew to be Lord Auberry's, *I never did pay any attentions to Miſs Montague—I have ſhewn her the civilities due to my father's relation—if ſhe ſays more, ſhe has miſinformed you.*

No, my Lord, ſhe has never ſaid half ſo much as you now ſay. There is not the leaſt occaſion for your aſſertions to clear you from all imputation on the ſcore of Miſs Montague. Believe me, I do your taſte and judgment more credit, than to ſuſpect you of any attachment in that quarter.

And *yet* you ſaid otherwiſe, not a moment ſince. How am I to underſtand you?

It was owing to the trifling miſtake of ſuppoſing, merely from the colour of your domino, that you was another perſon; for, till you declared yourſelf, I had no idea that I was ſpeaking to Lord Auberry.

Who then did you take me for? It ſeemed as if you thought him greatly intereſted about my Couſin.

I believe he would not deny the charge. There is ſuch a report, and I have reaſon to think he takes no particular pains to ſilence it. All men have not ſuch high notions of propriety as your Lordſhip.

So, then, ſhe is going to be married, I ſuppoſe?

Perhaps it is rather likely.

And, to whom?

That I do not think myſelf at liberty to tell you.

Why not?

Becauſe no perſon has a right to divulge any ſecret that does not belong to themſelves; or, even if it did, there may be quite as much wiſdom in keeping as in diſcloſing it.

Some match of intereſt, I do not doubt, to which the poor girl is to be the ſacrifice?

On

On the contrary, it will be an union of inclination on both ſides. Miſs Montague is your relation; as ſuch, it would be cruel to keep you in ſuſpenſe for her happineſs. Be aſſured, then, there is no ſacrifice in the caſe; for I know that the man who leads your Couſin to the altar muſt firſt be in actual poſſeſſion of her entire and undivided affections.

You are very knowing.

Any child may know as much, who is on the ſame footing with Miſs Montague that I am.

There is a damned deal of ſmuggling in this buſineſs, or I ſhould have heard it before.

Young men are ſeldom conſulted on theſe ſort of affairs. I believe had your Lordſhip been a *married* man, the caſe would have been different; ſhe could then have had no objection in the world to your being made acquainted with her approaching change of condition.

Change of condition! repeated he, burſting into a loud, ironical laugh, I wiſh my head may not ach till ſhe changes her condition!

Did you ever hear ſuch impertinence! I have hardly patience to relate it. I now every moment expected when the Duke would return, and bring Mr. Lexington with him. I made ſeveral attempts to get rid of him, but finding he would not be the firſt to move, I ſet him the example, by riſing haſtily and hiding myſelf in the multitude, where I ſuppoſed his averſion to a crowd would not permit him to follow me; but I was miſtaken, and though I ſhifted my ſituation twenty times, he was ſtill at my elbow, and as full of enquiries as ever. At laſt, I determined to take ſhelter with the Ducheſs.

Have you ſeen the Duke and Lexington, ſaid ſhe? I had hardly time to ſay no, when, looking round, I ſaw Lord Auberry, who, I thought, was at the diſtance of two rooms from me, ſtanding cloſe

cloſe at my ſide, I whiſpered the Ducheſs, —for God's ſake do not call me by my name!—I will tell you my reaſons afterwards.

No whiſpering, cried Lord Auberry: treaſon, death, tortures, may be conveyed in a whiſper!

At this moment Mr. Lexington flew towards me. How dare you, ſaid he, ſeizing both my hands, encounter the fury of my rage—it has been boiling through my veins ſince I laſt ſat eyes on you—Sweet is the revenge that——

Have done! cried I, interrupting him, and if you know me *now*, ſay not a word, I charge you!

Lord Auberry looked at him, with no good meaning; and I was glad at heart when his Lordſhip withdrew, which he did in much haſte, and left us to converſe at our eaſe.

I believe it is the prerogative of mankind to be impatient.—Mr. Lexington told me, he had ſent off an expreſs to Riverſ-

dale, yeſterday, charged with diſpatches to you, from the Duke, the Ducheſs, and himſelf. He allows no more than eight and forty hours of abſence. I told him, I hoped he had ſupplied his meſſenger with wings; for, unleſs he flew, it was impoſſible to perform the journey in twice the time his bounty had allotted.

Have you no ſentiment of compaſſion for me? ſaid he. I, who muſt walk on thorns, and lie down on beds of nettles, till he comes back? Is all your pity beſtowed on poſt-horſes, and a fellow whoſe mind is at eaſe, though his bones may be ſhaken? It is like the little commiſeration you have had for me the whole of this evening, and if you do not learn to behave better, I ſhall tell my Grandmama Auberry of you, Miſs Montague.

I muſt break off abruptly—I am ſorry for it—writing is like gambling, at leaſt by what I can diſcover ſince I have been in the way of inſtruction—to quit either the ſubject or the game one is fond of, is

attended

attended with reluctance: there is only this difference, that one is an innocent, the other a deſtructive purſuit. I fear Lord Aubery plays deep—Mr. Lexington has no propenſity that way—I am glad of it. The fate of poor Mrs. Beverly, in the Gameſter, may be that of any other woman. Principalities are as eaſily loſt as pounds.

Adieu, deareſt Grandmama, adieu dear Miſs Beauly. I could find much more to ſay, but a ſecond meſſage from thoſe whom at preſent I do obey, and from him, who, hereafter, I ſhall have pleaſure in obeying, calls me from you.

M. MONTAGUE.

LETTTER XXXIV.

Lord Auberry to Sir Aſhton Montague.

Feb, 29, 177—

I Am no longer refractory—no more ſneaking ſcruples govern me—I ſend you an irrevocable *carte blanche*—fill it up as you like—and if thy own abilities are not equal to the taſk, call in to thy aid all the men and women devils in whom thou canſt put thy truſt.

Hark ye, Montague, doſt thou not know that honour is the bond of fidelity—what oath then canſt thou invent, binding enough to tie down the accomplices of thy infernal devices? Some form of words thou muſt put together, to ſecure the ſilence of thy agents, *male* and *female*; they

they will elſe betray us—not from the horrors of conſcience—neither you, or I, or they, have any thing to do with conſcience—oh no, nothing in the world!—Thank God, my ſoul is callous, abſolutely callous!—and ſo is *thine*, my friend!——and ſo *muſt* be theirs, who are employed to act the under parts in the merry farce we are getting up. No, no, we ſhall not impede one another for conſcience ſake!

Rage, revenge, avarice, drunkenneſs, folly, are the avenues through which our ſecret will eſcape, if thou doſt not ſtop them up by ſome tremendous imprecation. But where, I ſay, is the oath that can bind together the workers of iniquity, though it were ſigned in blood, and ſealed with their damnation!

Tell the women, I have ſworn to blaſt the fame of their beauty!—tell the men, I have ſworn to make mince-meat of *them*, to cut them into ten thouſand pieces, if they *betray* their truſt. No, threaten them

in

in thy own name: thou knoweſt I dare not.

Montague, *thou* art the oſtenſible director, whilſt Auberry, the *daſtard* Auberry, ſculks behind thy bolder villany, creeping with reptile-pace, and ſtabbing in the dark. Yet, dare not think I have a coward ſoul. The fury of a lion, compared to what I feel, is gentleneſs, abſolute ſoftneſs; and, rather than ſee Miſs Montague the wife of any man that breathes upon the earth, I would, by Heaven I would, throw off the damned *raſcally* diſguiſe with which I hide my love—forget that I was human—with ſavage vengeance wage war againſt mankind, and conquer a *hoſt* of Lexingtons.

Laſt night———my head aches curſedly ——my heart aches curſedly———I muſt diſmiſs my thoughts for the preſent—they are deviliſh dull companions, and I am obliged to give them a wet of brandy every touch and turn, or I ſhould hang myſelf in my own garters.

One

One will not always do——the bottle ſtands at my elbow———I tried a firſt glaſs —I was ſtill a puppy—a ſecond cheered me—a third has reſtored me to reaſon—— I will try a fourth, and then I may be able to go on with my ſtory.

Lexington is going to be married to *my* Mary—I found it all out laſt night——— You muſt not mind if my lines are not ſtraight, or my ſentences connected,——I believe I have over-done it now——So I did in the coffee-room, one night after I had ſeen her at the opera—I took four glaſſes then, as faſt as I could bolt them ——you never ſaw ſuch a damned pickle as I was in after that—and I had a finer afterwards——but what does that ſignify?

Lexington is going to be married, but by G—— he ſhall do no ſuch act without my leave—no, not though that old meddling gentleman the Archbiſhop himſelf of Canterbury ſhould grant the licence.—— I found it all out laſt night———O my boy, you never ſaw ſuch ſport in your life

as

as I could have ſhewn you at the maſquerade———I don't recollect how it happened—but there I found it all out.

Lexington, whether I ſay it or not, is a noble fellow, by G——; not exactly of thy own ſort——he would do as much to get his friend out of a ſcrape as any man ——*but*—mind me, Montague—he would not firſt get him into it———I don't ſay this by way of reflection——*thou* art an honeſt fellow *too*—in thy way——for, when the Devil employs thee, thou art ſure to do his buſineſs as well as another——— After this apology we are friends again, I hope.

Faith, Lexington ſhall marry any woman in the kingdom but my Mary——he who wins Mary, muſt firſt vanquiſh—— 'zounds, but I dare not draw my ſword! ———There, I ſay there are more ways of touching a man's heart than with *ſteel*—— What if I am drunk—I can compoſe my plans, as Lord R——— did his muſic, as well drunk as ſober———And as I am appointed

pointed only to the honourable poſt of diſcharging pop-guns in the dark, you ſhall find it is not for want of ſkill to occupy a better ſtation——but I cannot explain all the half-formed ideas that are floating in my brain—it is as much impoſſible for me to collect them, at preſent, as to make the room ſtand ſtill, which is now running round and round—with your happy friend —at the rate of three miles in a ſecond!

——————Can you tell me, Sir Aſhton Montague, what is the reaſon that I am not going to marry your Couſin?——I am ſure there is nobody in the world who can be more ready than I am to fulfil all my engagements to her——— Upon my ſoul I never adored any other woman than herſelf——and now ſhe is a thouſand times more adorable than ever!———I beg your pardon——a gleam of light breaks in on my benighted memory, to ſhew me there was a day—a week—a month——— well, but it's off again—and I am as dark as before——I only know ſhe cannot be mine

mine—*yet*—and that ſhe ſhall not be another's—*ever*———Montague, I am going to lay down I —— can ſit up no longer—I will write more to-morrow—if I can.

———I have ſlept half an hour, but my dreams were torture—a fit of dulneſs came over me——I would not have indulged it, had I foreſeen the viſion my fancy would have repreſented——I waked in terrors—rung my bell—re-dreſſed—and am again ſet down at my ſecretaire, to beſtow on you another half hour——any company is better than my own—any employment more to my taſte, than flying about on the fiery wings of dæmons and hobgoblins ——What a ſcene has been opened to me in this ſhort dream—aſk me not *what* it was—it is *too* terrible to relate—I ſhall try to forget it; or if it will force its way back, I ſhall have recourſe to my old champion, and attack *ſpiritual* with *ſpiritual*.

A week of reſt and cold water would not more effectually have reſcued my ſenſes, from the obſcurity that enveloped them

them when I left you, half an hour ago, than this dream or viſion has done—Fright, I have been told, has the faculty of clearing the reaſon, clouded by inebriety—I deſire no ſuch remedy—it is a thouſand times worſe than the diſeaſe——You hear me confeſs I have been frightened—it is the *firſt* time in my life—*mark that*——and by no natural means—mark *that* alſo——yet it was but the work of imagination——then why ſhould it hang about my heart *now* that I am awake——We are going to embark, Montague——had we not better---ſtop—but *then* will ſhe not be the wife of Lexington?——*Avaunt!* thou deſtructive idea—worſe than all the ſpectres Hell can produce———Let us go on, my friend, and ſtop when the work is finiſhed——there will be time enough after that for repentance.

I thought myſelf more ſteady than in reality I find to be the caſe——I am not well enough to reviſe what I have written——let it go then, and make the beſt of it

——you

——you have been uſed to decipher my meanings, when I could hardly be ſaid to underſtand them——Do you remember that fatal gift of penetration, which made you diſcover what I did not myſelf ſuſpect?——No, no——I never was in love with any body but Miſs Montague——but you perſuaded me——and you have undone me!

——This will never do—I am a cup too low yet——ſo here it goes—again—again—and now it will do.

What think you happened to me laſt night?——I ſaw her, I told her I never had loved her—but her angel-face was concealed under the maſk of—a devil, I believe——I do not exactly recollect—ſhe had the advantage of me—ſhe knew me, but I knew not her——oh, it was a curſed take-in!——but what matters it?—perhaps it is for the beſt.——What I have told her with my tongue, is as ſtrong a proof that ſhe is now nothing to me, as if I had given her the moſt *inſulting* aſſurances of this

this damned lie in my own hand-writing and under my own ſignature——which I think—if I am capable of thinking at all—was the plan chalked out for the poor idiot Auberry to proceed by——Well, if it was not that, it was ſomething like it.

My mother, my ſiſter, my friend, my *lawyers*—I hope I have pleaſed you all *now*—now that I am the tame tractable fool you would have me to be—*now* that I make no reſiſtance, but ſit down contented—to be fed—dangled—and tutored, like a babe—or fetch and carry like a ſpaniel?——Will not this tell well in the archives of my family?——Will not the ſixteenth Earl of Auberry make a moſt reſpectable figure in hiſtory?

——She has told me that ſhe actually marries Lexington from choice—from inclination——I could have forgiven her for taking him on *any* other motive——but curſe me, if I forgive her for this!——that ſhe ſhould love *me* is impoſſible—I think I ſhould deſpiſe *her* if ſhe did——

but

but what buſineſs has ſhe to love Lexington?——Beſides, I looked forward, you know——there again, I fear you have cheated me———*it will all be well—it will come round*———I am miſerably cut——yet I have a bright thought, if concerning this doing well, and this coming about——— I will try and give it vent——'tis like an apple———No——damn it—that will not do———I mean 'tis like an orchard, full of apple-trees, all in bloſſom, where you leave me in a famiſhing condition, and tell me, if I will ſtand ſtill with my jaws open till the fruit ripens, it will then drop into my mouth!———This is the firſt word of ſenſe I have written, and it ſhall be the laſt of nonſenſe.———I am any thing—or any body you pleaſe———but I believe my name is

AUBERRY.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

Miſs Beauly to Lady Jane Petworth.

Feb. 9th, 17—

IT is only two days ſince I wrote to you, my dear aunt, but can I let the expreſs, who arrived here an hour ago from the Duke of Cleveland, return back without one ſheet, at leaſt, of ſhort acknowledgements to you?—Impoſſible!

What a charming propheteſs you are, and how all your propheſies have been verified! can you foreſee no ſuch huſband as Mr. Lexington in ſtore for your Anna? —I gueſs what your anſwer will be—I do not know another ſuch, child—I believe you, dear aunt, and muſt be content till ſome hero of a ſecond rate falls in your way,

way, when, perhaps you will begin to think of my preferment.

Joy is a perfect camelion, it changes its complexion juſt as it happens to ſhew itſelf on different occaſions, and on different ſubjects; in me, it appears like madneſs—in Lady Auberry, it is compoſure perſonified—it revels in my features—it draws tears from her eyes, and yet how much ſtronger muſt her tranſports be, who lives but in the felicity of her granddaughter, to any inferior ſentiment of admiration or friendſhip, that in the utmoſt ſincerity of my heart I am able to imbibe for Miſs Moutague—I think I love her almoſt as well as I ſhould have loved a ſiſter; yet it is not in nature that I ſhould love her as Lady Auberry loves her.

If I was leſs happy, I might be more intelligible. Lady Auberry is preparing her diſpatches, and I am ſitting by her ſide—I can hardly take my eyes from her placid benign countenance—how then can I know what I am about: never ſure, at the age of

of ſeventy-eight, was there a face ſo animated—ſo beautiful as Lady Auberry's: had ſhe lived and died in Rome, her virtues would have ſainted her, and painters incircled her head with the glory by which ſaints are diſtinguiſhed—had ſhe been born amongſt ſavages, ſhe would have been worſhipped as the diſpenſer of thoſe attributes which are every where held ſacred. Our's is not a country of idolatry; if it was, all men in the days of her youth muſt have knelt at her ſhrine. But, whether her own ſex, in youth or in age, would have acknowledged her ſupremacy is a matter of doubt. I ſaw enough to convince me; in the ſhort time I was in town with Miſs Montague, that however the *laſt* generation of females might have been diſpoſed towards Lady Auberry, the *preſent* race of *fine* ladies are not inclined to pay any particular homage to her deſcendant.

It was very fortunate that I happened to meet the Duke's expreſs in my walk, before

he reached the houſe, otherwiſe the alarm might have been premature. Sudden ſurpriſals are not the beſt reſtoratives for declining nature; and Lady Auberry, from the window at which ſhe was ſitting, with the ſaſh thrown up, to enjoy the freſhneſs of the fineſt morning I ever ſaw at this early dawn of ſpring, muſt have ſeen the impatient meſſenger of an impatient maſter (I do not mean his Grace, but Mr. Lexington), not galloping, but abſolutely flying up the avenue. He ſlackened his pace when he ſaw me. I recollected, in a moment, the Duke's livery—feared ſome dreadful tidings—my heart failed me—and I beckoned him to ſtop.

All my terrors vaniſhed at the anſwer I received to my firſt, very eagerly aſked, queſtion—Is Miſs Montague well?

I next directed the ſervant to go by a back way to the houſe, and I carried his diſpatches myſelf to Lady Auberry.

You return too ſoon, my dear, ſaid her Ladyſhip, the moment I made my appearance;

pearance; I did not expect you this hour; I am ſure you have not brought me your uſual offering of ſweet violets, whoſe precious roots were planted by the hands of my ſweeter Mary.

I am no truant—I have not neglected the delightful taſk you aſſigned me, I have only poſtponed it (I replied) to bring you, I hope, a better preſent than Miſs Montague's violets; for, in my way to the bank where they flouriſh, I picked up intelligence of Miſs Montague herſelf.

How can that be? aſked ſhe; for we ſhall not get our letters till evening.

Not indeed if they were to arrive by the common mode of conveyance, returned I, but I have got them by other means, and here they are (I had hid the packet under my cloak, which I now delivered into her hands); but before your Ladyſhip breaks the ſeal, for the whole contents were incloſed in one wrapper, I can aſſure you our dear Mary is in perfect good health.—I ſuppoſe ſhe is going to be married, and

writes for your approbation. This I ſaid by gueſs, for then I did not know a word of the matter.

Though I gave it a light turn, the arrival of a packet ſo unexpected, ſeemed to alarm and rather agitate Lady Auberry, for her hand trembled as the wax divided; and having examined the ſuperſcription of three letters incloſed in the firſt cover, ſhe cried out, there is not a ſyllable of Mary's writing on any of them!

I was a good deal ſurpriſed myſelf, at this extraordinary circumſtance; but, renewing my aſſurances that ſhe was nevertheleſs as well as well could be, ſhe proceeded with more courage to examine the contents, and the firſt ſhe opened was from Mr. Lexington.

Read it, Miſs Beauly, ſaid ſhe, I cannot.—It is a ſhame to encourage theſe ſort of emotions at my age, which are ſtill ſo ſtrong as to affect my little remnant of perception. If it had been written *by* Mary, I could have read it, perhaps without

out glaſſes——it muſt be *about* Mary—and, with the aid of glaſſes, I cannot diſtinguiſh one letter from another.

Mr. Lexington's was ſuch an epiſtle as muſt make the fair ſubject of it not only happy, but vain; and if there is ſuch an ingredient as vanity in the compoſition of Miſs Montague, it can no longer lie dormant; it muſt be rouſed at knowing that ſhe poſſeſſes the entire affections of the moſt handſome, graceful, accompliſhed and amiable man in the whole circle of faſhion.

Our delighted Grandmama did not exactly expreſs her joy in my language—her's wanted rapidity, glowing rapidity — it wanted colouring—it wanted the flowery eloquence of nonſenſe—in ſhort, it wanted every thing but energy—unreſtrained happineſs unalloyed—and piety unexampled.

You know, my dear, kind Aunt, I always loved the Duke of Cleveland, and that I was very much afraid of (which is equal to ſaying), I did not love his Ducheſs;

but I am determined never more to diſlike her as long as I live, if I can help it, and I will alſo try to help it; for if ever I again happen to ſee her in her *diſagreeables*, as no doubt I ſhall, I will think of her very polite letter to Lady Auberry, her warm expreſſions of affection for Miſs Montague, the *predilection* ſhe declares for an union between her and Mr. Lexington; then, ſhould I not be able to place another good action to her account, this is ſo charming a *trait*, that it ſhall ſtand in the place of univerſal charity in my eſtimation; and if it does not cover *all* her tranſgreſſions againſt humility, it ſhall be an atonement for *many* of them.

The Duke, of courſe, conveys his ſentiments and propoſals as any good man would do, who is ſeeking the honour and felicity of his family, where he is ſure his hopes will not be diſappointed. I am to ſee Lady Auberry's anſwer to theſe dear letters, as ſoon as ſhe has finiſhed them. There will be no occaſion for my giving a repetition

repetition of their contents, you will readily find them in the knowledge you poſſes of her heart and underſtanding. The Duke's offers of ſettlement are very noble; there is no fear that ſhe will be left behind, either in the road of candour, affection, or generoſity.

How I long for the dear Mary's next journal! Not ſo much for her account of the maſquerade you had laſt night, but to hear from herſelf every thing about this delightful conqueſt!

I ſaid, juſt now, to Lady Auberry, that I hoped Miſs Montague would like Mr. Lexington; and this was her anſwer, uſhered in with that ſort of ſweet, ſatisfied, joyful ſmile, which belongs, in a peculiar manner, to the ſubject of her Granddaughter—

Certainty, my dear, precludes *hope*; that ſhe has permitted theſe letters to be ſent to me, amounts to a demonſtration of her ſentiments.—A prince ſhould not be the huſband of my Mary, but by her *own* elec-

tion.——Beloved Mary! ſhe added, lifting up her eyes and claſped hands to Heaven, as if to call down bleſſings from thence on the child of her dotage, Mayeſt thou find in Lexington a recompence for the treachery of Auberry!

Lady Auberry has juſt turned round, to bid me remind you that ſhe has not received a line from you this fortnight. She orders me alſo to ſay, that if ſhe does not hear in a day or two, at the fartheſt, ſhe is determined to vent all her ſpleen and ill-humour on her Grand-daughter and Mr. Lexington, who ſhe is ſure are amenable to puniſhment, as being the oſtenſible cauſes of your ſilence.

I aſked her Ladyſhip how much longer it would be before ſhe ſhould have finiſhed her diſpatches, and find I can go down another page or two on a freſh ſheet of paper, without fear of detaining the Duke's ſervant beyond her Ladyſhip's leiſure, who means to ſend a ſhort letter to Miſs Montague,

tague, as well as to anſwer thoſe ſhe has received this morning.

At a little diſtance from hence lives Dame Eſtrige, who nurſed Miſs Montague from the time that fatal accident happened, which deprived the dear infant of its amiable mother, till the death of Lord Auberry, her grandfather.

This good Dame Eſtrige has been our conſtant viſitor, at leaſt three times a week, ſince I came to Riverſdale. She is diſtractedly fond of her young Lady, and, what I think moſt extremely unnatural, ſhe is much more intereſted about every thing that concerns her than for the welfare of her own daughter, the little, ſimple, modeſt Jenny, who is the preſent attendant on her beloved nurſling.

Lady Auberry ſays, this ſort of preference for nurſe-children, however unnatural, is the moſt common thing in the world. She is a great favourite—always moſt kindly received—and never goes home with an empty purſe.

I would not, my dear Aunt, wiſh you to tell either Miſs Montague or Jenny my opinion, becauſe it will only give them trouble. But I believe this poor old nurſe will not be very long the inhabitant of her neat cottage, or any other earthly dwelling.

Lady Auberry does not ſee the change in her that I do. She came here yeſterday, but it was in conſequence of a kind meſſage from her Ladyſhip, who, fearing ſhe was ill, becauſe we had not ſeen her for five days, ſent a carriage to make the conveyance eaſy to her, if ſhe ſhould be unwell; but, when ſhe did come, ſome other excuſe was made, beſides ſickneſs, for her long abſence. And yet, in my life, I never ſaw ſuch an alteration as had taken place ſince I laſt ſaw her. It was only viſible to me; for, though ſhe looks more like a ghoſt than a living creature, as long as there was no change in the ſubject, with which ſhe never fails to entertain her benefactreſs, as long as ſhe was aſking queſ-

tions

tions about, laviſhing praiſes and calling down bleſſings, on Miſs Montague, Lady Auberry was too much delighted to perceive any change in the good woman herſelf, and yet ſhe certainly looks ten years older than ſhe did five days ago.

I could not but remark, that as often as ſhe talked of Miſs Montague, her name was followed by tears, or preceded by ſighs, though ſhe took great pains to hide them from the obſervation of Lady Auberry. It is impoſſible, by her whole appearance, I think, that ſhe can live long; and the fear that ſhe ſhould never more ſee her beloved foſter-child, was what perhaps occaſioned her to ſpeak her name, and to hear it ſpoken, with ſuch marked affection. I am, from this one inſtance, rather inclined to believe, with Lady Auberry, that what ſeems unnatural may not be uncommon.

When I tried to turn her thoughts, as well as to direct them, and talked to her of her daughter Jenny, ſhe was perfectly

indifferent to all the praiſes I beſtowed on her, and only replied, ſhe thanked my Ladyſhip for all my kindneſs, but as for Jenny, ſhe was not troubled about her.

Lady Auberry has this moment finiſhed, and I have only to ſay, what I have ſaid a thouſand times before, and what I hope my actions have expreſſed as often, that I am, my deareſt Aunt, your grateful and dutiful Niece,

A. Beauly.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

Sir Aſhton Montague to Lord Auberry.

March 7, 17—

I Date from no place, becauſe I have no particular reſidence, but, like all mortal men, am here to-day and gone to-morrow; however, your Lordſhip's moſt temperate or intemperate letter of abuſe, had the good fortune to overtake me at Bath, where I was making a flying call on your amiable mother and ſiſter, who have more underſtanding in matters of *buſineſs* than their whole ſex put together.

I could hardly gulp down ſome of your expreſſions, my Lord, the devil take me if I could. Drunk or ſober you ſhould know your friends, and keep them. You have

have not loſt me yet—but, take more care in future, or by G—— you may chance to loſe my friendſhip and your own life into the bargain.

Now, do not imagine that I want to quarrel with thee, Auberry—I have no ſuch intention——but, to hold on good terms, it is right, as you tell me your mind without *ceremony*, that I ſhould follow your *very* excellent example——*ſo* now let us ſhake hands; for, by this *arrangement*, we muſt be blockheads not to underſtand one another. *Silence* is the word—*eternal* ſilence.——Whoever but whiſpers to *betray*, muſt caſe his perfidious ſoul in iron, or *thy* ſword, or *my* ſword, ſhall ſearch it out, and ſend it to the *maſter* devil, of whom thou ſo *humorouſly* calleſt me a faithful and diligent ſervant.

There is nothing in the world more effectual than plain dealing, to the preſervation of confidence; there could be no links in the chain of ſociety without it, particularly amongſt *our claſs*; ſuch exploits

ploits as we achieve are only ſupported by *plain* dealing and *unſhaken* confidence: without them, all our well-built projects muſt go to the ground, becauſe neither *Auberry* or *Montague* can perform them by the proweſs of his own ſingle arm.

I did not truſt the whole contents of your laſt *friendly* epiſtle with Mrs. or Miſs Pledell; there is no occaſion for their knowing that *Miſs Montague* is at the bottom of your motive for conſenting to a plan which *they* think ſufficiently connected to your *own* immediate intereſt, to gain a complete victory over your former ſcruples.

I merely told them, that you was come to your ſenſes; that you had ſent me a *carte blanche*, which, with their aſſiſtance, I would fill up——yes, my boy, we will fill it up—with hieroglyphics, not to be underſtood by any body but the parties who are alone intitled to decypher the myſtical characters. And I have to aſſure you, that ſince I diſcovered to them a bend in the iron ſtubbornneſs of thy conſtitutional diſpoſition,

diſpoſition, no mother or ſiſter can be prouder of a ſon and a brother than theſe ladies are of the condeſcending Lord Auberry, who, in fact, is merely condeſcending to promote his *own* happineſs, by the *only* poſſible means it can *ever* be ſecured to him.

Let us but guard the Heſperian fruit till thou art *free* to gather it, then bid defiance to all obſtacles; for, if ſhe will not be *thy* wife when ſhe *may*, ſhe ſhall, by Heaven, when thou pleaſeſt to make her ſuch! for whilſt there are horſes and raſcals in the nation, we ſhall not want means to carry her off in triumph!

Much has already been *done*—much more remains to be done, before this laſt, beſt end, can be accompliſhed. But you know the *conditions* on which I have conſented to ſerve you with my wits, my fortune, and my ſword; the latter I only mean to uſe if any meddling puppy ſhould call thee out before thy ſhackles are taken off, which, at preſent, reſtrain thee from

making

making a bold, oſtenſible appearance in thy own cauſe.

One ſhall our *motives*, one our *intereſt* be;
Thy Friend ſhall *fight* the man who threatens thee.

The conditions——you *know* the conditions——but as I have ſometimes found that when the work is *half* finiſhed, the memory begins to *fail*, I have made certain memorandums, which, before I go a ſtep further in the buſineſs, muſt be formally executed; for which purpoſe, I ſhall call upon you at my firſt leiſure.

This job once done, I ſhall next examine the ſnares I have been laying ſince I ſaw you laſt, not to catch game, but to entrap idiots, and have reaſon to think I may find even more than I ſhall want for actual ſervice; however, it is better to be too full than too ſcarce of hands; for where one univerſal opinion *has* been eſtabliſhed, and *muſt* be deſtroyed, agents, *active* agents, will be neceſſary in almoſt every corner

corner of the habitable globe, to undo the authenticity of old conceits. Many are the *dirty* palms that muſt be tickled on this buſineſs—but *thy* eſtate is clear—ſo is *mine*; and if we give them a *critical* dip under water, it will not weaken their conſtitutional ſtrength in the end.

The higher powers I know are ready to ſerve us, without *fee* or *reward*—I will anſwer for *all* the women, and *ſome* of the men. The latter are but a comparative *few* to the former. I bluſh to tell thee, I do not think there are more than a dozen, out of all the men I know (hirelings excepted), from whom I would aſk, much *leſs* expect aſſiſtance.

By the term of *hirelings*, I do not merely include ſlaves and ſervants, *but* led captains and needy gentlemen, to whom the compliment of a brace of thouſands may be as acceptable as a civil ſpeech to an old forſaken coquette. We only give theſe *gentlemen* higher wages than ſervants, and

and the former are ready to perform all the honourable offices of the latter.

I will tell you, Auberry, for your conſolation, that though in point of numbers we ſhall find ourſelves in a miſerable minority, when we count *our* ſide of the queſtion and reckon on *independent* members; *yet* we have names amongſt them that will not diſgrace *thy* rank or *my* talents. I have, on my liſt, noble lords and noble commoners to bring forward, when it is neceſſary to produce them; great ſoldiers and great lawyers: amongſt the latter, there is one of the fraternity who will *write* for us, if we chooſe to employ him; and, faith, he is up to *any* ſubject. Yet I ſhall vote not to commit ourſelves to *public* inveſtigation; but as far as a ſquib *can* go on any little *bandepage* without a *name*, I ſhall have no objection to add ſomething more to his *private* fame as an author.

Leave all theſe matters to *my* management—*your* part lies in another caſt—*you* muſt not be ſuſpected to have *any* hand in the

the affair. Remember the words of your *counſel*, that nothing *like* colluſion muſt appear, or you would loſe your cauſe, which, by my laſt letters from Milan, is in a fair way.

I do not think it unlucky, that chance gave you fair play to declare off *with* Miſs Montague *to* Miſs Montague herſelf—Upon my ſoul, it was more honourable than if you had done it by letter. However, what in fact are ſuch trifling circumſtances as thoſe, one way or the other, when matters come to be cleared up between you?—what ſquare will it break?—will it make any difference in her preſent ſentiments for thee, Auberry?—no, no—take my word for it, women are glad enough to get huſbands at any rate; and, I ſuppoſe, our pretty couſin is not ſo much unlike all the reſt of her ſex, as to puſh away the bleſſing, when it is in her power to graſp it.

Lexington's pretenſions are a mere *bagatelle*, and her *penchant* for him all my eye!

eye! Were theſe the only difficulties we had to cope with, our wits would have to contend only with ſhadows.

The world *believes* Miſs Montague *is in love* with Lord Auberry—I have taken care to ſend the report about, and in no *queſtionable* ſhape. It is ſtill *more* neceſſary that Lord Auberry's *indifference* for Miſs Montague ſhould, in the eyes of the world, be *alſo* eſtabliſhed. To ſettle *that*, is your concern, and you have made a good beginning; apply to your friendly bottle as much as you pleaſe—but keep up your courage—keep up your manly reſolution—we are gone too far—we are between two fires——a retreat is impoſſible—and the leaſt wavering, now, would ſend us all to perdition.

Let me reaſon with you a moment before I diſmiſs the ſubject; let me try, by the ſoundneſs of argument, to prevent any returns of theſe yawning, agueiſh qualms, that made you ſo long hang ſhivering and aloof from the only means in the world

that

that could have been pointed out to you by the finger of fate as the ſalvation of thoſe hopes *once* forfeited, and only by this *one* way redeemable.

Yes, you are damnably caſed up, and I know it was a curſed unlucky blot; but it was yourſelf who caſt the dice—it was not I that threw them—had you been contented with the hit, it was your own; but you threw up the game when it was in your hands, and would not ſit down contented with your fair fortune, becauſe you recollected having began a game of the ſame ſort with a party you liked better, though from that party you had been a deſerter almoſt at the beginning of the ſet.

This is the ſubſtance of my brief; and to you, who comprehend my cant phraſes, the few reaſonable ſtrictures with which I ſhall follow it up, will ſhew (if you have not ſeen it before) the abſolute neceſſity there has been for every thing we *have* done or *mean* to do; that is to ſay, if you

are

are *reſolved* to carry your point at *all* events, which I preſume to be your preſent intentions; otherwiſe you ſhould have reſigned your purſuit in time. Affairs might, ſome time ago, have been accommodated with little trouble; but, *as it is*, I once more repeat, ſuch ſteps are already taken to ſerve you, in your own way too, as never *ſhall* be retracted from as long as I have warm blood in my veins, or vital heat in my body.

If I ever begged pardon of *any* man, I would aſk it of you, Auberry, for the peremptory tone of deciſion in which I concluded the *laſt* ſentence. It was not that I have any ſuſpicion of your *firmneſs*, neither have I any more doubts of *your* honour than I have of my own; but, can I make you underſtand *too* plainly how invincibly I am *determined* to ſee out this troubleſome buſineſs, which, in the concluſion, will not fail of inſuring felicity to my friend—that tender, delicate felicity, before which every other ſpecies of happineſs

neſs is done away, or offers itſelf in vain to his acceptance.

This obſervation calls me to order, and brings me back to the point from which I ſet out in the laſt page, namely, to a ſhort moment's conſolatory reaſoning.

Miſs Montague is the *abſolute* miſtreſs of *your* fate—*you* would ſacrifice a thouſand lives to be the *maſter* of her's—Good—*You* are *bound*—*ſhe* is free—*you* dare not ſpeak—*you* dare not look.—*Others* can ſpeak—*others* can look; and ſome lucky dog, who ſpeaks and looks better than all the reſt, by-and-by darts down like a hawk on your quarry, and flies off with the prize.

This would be ſport to *you* with a vengeance!

Lexington is the man you fear at preſent; and as it is probable that he is not yet very far advanced in that head-ſtrong paſſion, to which you have yielded yourſelf up ſoul and body, he might, from a very extraordinary fund of humanity, together with as capital a ſtock of generoſity,

he

he might, I ſay, have withdrawn his addreſſes from Miſs Montague, and carried them to ſome other lady, could you but have moved his paſſions by any tale that has a claim to commiſeration; that your own, perhaps, would have done the thing was certainly poſſible.

Well, then, we will ſuppoſe Lexington has raiſed the ſiege, and you are left maſter of the field; and what does this conqueſt amount to? why, the getting rid of *one* rival, when perhaps there are a hundred ready to ſtep in and fill his deſerted poſt. —You cannot flatter your hopes that Miſs Montague, in her preſent ſituation, will be without pretenders to her favour; it would be abſolutely madneſs to form ſuch expectations.—And where are *you* then, my friend? exactly where you were before, with *this* difference, that every lover is not a Lexington, ready to ſacrifice ſomething of his *own* better views to the *diſtant* proſpects of another.

You ſee, my Lord, I have given the argument fair play; that I have even ſtated as a fact what, in the very firſt inſtance, muſt remain doubtful, I mean that Lexington, after being received as a lover, would ever have reſigned Miſs Montague to you, though you had begged it of him on your knees; and I have alſo ſhewn you what muſt have ſtill been the conſequences, how fatal to your predetermined plan of poſſeſſion, had the fact been really and truly eſtabliſhed?

Pauſe here Auberry——Conſider *your* ſituation—conſider Miſs Montague—*her* charms—*her* accompliſhments—*her* connections—*her* fortune——and when you have done ſo, I expect this honeſt acknowledgment, without any more of your damned ſquinting reflections, that you are indebted to my plans for the accompliſhment of your wiſhes, at leaſt as far as the keeping Miſs Montague ſingle can be ſaid to accompliſh them; and that there is not

another

another ſcheme in the fertile brain of man or woman that could have been attended with certain ſucceſs, but that laid down with ſo much circumſpection, and to be executed with ſo much firmneſs, by my dear Lord, your moſt determined friend, and moſt faithful humble ſervant,

ASHTON MONTAGUE.

P. S. I ſhall probably ſee you next week.

LETTTER XXXVII.

Jenny Eſtrige to Dame Eſtrige.

March 9, 17—

DEAR MOTHER,

WITH my duty to good Lady Auberry, who I have never ſeen nothing like ſince I came to London; with my bleſſing to you, love to brothers, and compliments to all friends, I take up my pen, hoping you are in good health as I am at the preſent writing.—This is to let you know, dear Mother, that my dear, ſweet, kind, beautiful young lady, as you ſhall hear, is a going to be married to a Squire, almoſt as big as a Lord, who will be a Lord too one of theſe days, all the ladies and gentlemen in the ſteward's room ſay ſo.

Beſides

Beſides being a Lord, the Squire takes after his uncle, the Lord Duke, by reaſon he is his next kinſman, and ſo he will be a Lord and a Duke both; but if he was as great as his Majeſty, and as rich as a Jew, I ſhould not never think he was worthy to wipe the ſhoes of my lady, becauſe why, a little love goes further than a great deal of gold; and if ſo be he was not very loving, and deſperate fond, as well as rich and great, I am ſure I ſhould cry my eyes out, that ſhe ſhould be married to any ſuch a ſort of a man.

But, dear Mother, I have not got nothing at all to ſay in diſparagement of Squire Lexington, by reaſon he is a tall, portly, handſome gentleman, as ever I ſa my eyes upon; and, by what I can find out, there is no want of love on no ſide at all.

The waiting gentlemen ſay to me, when I go down to dinner or ſupper, and they have been tending up ſtairs upon the quality—Why, Mrs. Jenny, ſays they, our

young maſter that will be, and your pretty young miſtreſs that is, will be the fineſt couple that have been ſeen for many a day; and then they ſhake me by the hand, which in a civil way I let them do, and they call me fellow ſervant, and ſays as how 'Squire Lexington never minds no other lady but mine; and looks at her as if he could eat her, or as though there was no victuals at table worth looking at but herſelf; and my dear, dear young lady is ſo chearful and ſo happy, Mother, it would do your heart good to ſee how ſhe never don't ſigh and bewail herſelf now as ſhe did at firſt to go back again to Riverſdale; and ſhe ſays to me, Jenny ſays ſhe, be a good girl, I am going to be happy, very happy myſelf, and ſo ſhall you, and ſo ſhall my good old nurſe—you ſhall both live with me, and I will give you a portion when you meet with an honeſt man, willing to be your huſband, and I will ſet up your brothers in buſineſs.

You

You never did hear nothing like this, Mother, no, I am ſure you never did not; but you know very well what ſort of a lady mine is, and ſo you will know I tell you no lie, and I dareſt to ſay ſhe will be as good as her word every day in the week.

Was there ever another ſuch well-blooded lady born into the world? Do you mind, Mother, how you uſed to tell me, that when Lady Auberry came to fetch her away to the great houſe, after my Lord was dead and buried, how the dear little ſoul clung about your neck, and ſaid ſhe would have no mammy, but mammy Eſtrige; and how ſhe cried and roared, and ſobbed like any thing, becauſe my good Lady would take her away; and how ſhe ſtamped her pretty little feet with her fine red ſhoes on, which Mrs. Martin had brought the day before, with the lace cap and white frock, to dreſs her up like a lady, by the time her Grandmama came in the coach to fetch her. And ſo, as I was ſaying, and as you have told me a hundred

and a hundred times, ſhe ſat up her pipes, becauſe ſhe could not have Sarah, and Rachael, and I, and Aminadab, and Timothy, and Samuel, go along with her —pretty creature!

Well, ſhe is, for all the world, juſt the ſame now as ſhe was then—ſhe never don't forget nobody; and though ſhe is here a perfect goddeſs, as one may ſay, and nobody is thought nothing about but her, yet ſhe is as kind and as humble, I warrant, as if ſhe had ſtill been your poor little Mary Wilſon, as ſhe was called before her Ladyſhip turned out to be her own grandmama.

She looks like any queen, I muſt ſay, when ſhe is dreſſed and goes down to dinner—but, for all that, there is no more pride in her than there is in my Lady Auberry her own ſelf; and all the ſervants were ready to worſhip her, for ſhe ſpeaks ſo kind and ſo civil to them, that they ſays there is not no ſuch another born lady in the land of the living. Aye, ſays they, there

there is no ſuch another as Miſs Montague that darkens our doors, all the reſt of them are a parcel of old *Harryſdams*, or young jilts, or *mumping* gentlewomen. I underſtand the meaning of all theſe words except old *Harryſdams*; I do ſuppoſe it is ſomething wicked enough, but I don't never aſk what they means by *Harryſdams;* but you know, Mother, it is common amongſt us to call the black gentleman Old Harry, and dam ſtands in place of mother, ſo putting them together, I do believe that *Harryſdam* is nothing more or leſs than to ſay they are the devil's own mother.

If any country perſon, ſuch as the like of me, had this ſort of language in their mouths againſt their betters, they might as well eat their fingers; but here it is the faſhion, and every one will ſpeak his mind, and care no more for their betters than for their worſers.

I don't think, Mother, I ſhall chooſe to marry a great man, becauſe I does not

much admire their manners, and ſhall never think God's bleſſing will light where there is playing on the cards of a Sunday; and yet I don't pretend for to ſay that I never ſhould have liked a great man well enough to have been aſked with him at church, if it had not been for theſe ſort of things, becauſe Mr. Roggers, the butler, is very well to be liked I muſt needs ſay, and he wears the very richeſt of ſilk waiſt-coats, ſtanding an end with gold and ſilver, all, as he tells me, worked by the nuns, with ruffles over the tops of his fingers, of lace that the Lord Duke himſelf might wear for the fineneſs of them; ſo that I cann't but ſay, in no other ſhape, one ſhould turn up one's noſe at him. There is my Lady the Ducheſs's woman, and the houſekeeper, and two or three more of the bettermoſt ſervants, that look as if they could tear my eyes out whenever Mr. Roggers is a little civil to me, which is every time I happen to come in his way; but they need not vex themſelves, for I never

never will marry, as I tell him ten times a day, to no man of morals, according as my good young lady adviſes me not for to do.

You will ſoon ſee how you like Mr. Roggers, dear Mother, for when my lady is married to the Squire, my Lord the Duke, and my Lady the Ducheſs, and all of us, are coming to Riverſdale. Oh, dear! how I do wiſh it was over! and then if you think his morals can be mended—why he is very ſightly to look upon, and, as we ſay in the country, to be ſure I may be worſe offered before I am twice married, for to my thinking, though he is a little heatheniſh, he is no worſe than his betters, nor half ſo bad: it is a ſhame upon them to ſet ſuch examples. I can't but ſay that I never did not ſee any thing unhandſome in Mr. Roggers; he looks like a ſober man in his buſineſs, and never offered to be free or uncivil to me, ever ſince I come to London; but he is very kind to me for all that, and got me into a

ſnug corner the other night, behind a tea-table, where I ſhould ſee better by half than any of the other ladies who he employed to make tea as well as me, but I was put into the beſt room of all.

I can't deſcribe to you, dear Mother, what ſort of a meeting his was; but my young Lady called it a maſquerade, and ſo did Mr. Rogers; and, call it what you will, it is for all the world the very ſame thing as a mamoning match with us at Chriſtmas, only that when our neighbours uſed to dreſs themſelves up like fools, and go to the great houſe firſt, acting the plays, and after that to the beſt of the pariſh, they only went in a ſcore or the matter of that; but, at our maſquerade, there were hundreds on hundreds, and thouſands on thouſands. Theſe ſports are all made, in the country, by poor folks; but here, it was all done by gentlefolk.

I can't ſay no more, at preſent, of this merry-making, becauſe my lady's footman has juſt knocked at the door, to tell me that

that my Lady Down's ſervant is waiting for a cap, Lady Bell Langton's for a hat, and Lady Arraminta Boice's for a handkerchief. And thus it is that my Lady's things are travelling about in band-boxes all over the town, and all day long. Poor dear creature, ſhe is ſo good-natured that ſhe is always as ready to lend as other folks are to borrow. I do believe if ſhe was to wear a diſh-clout on her head, all the fine ladies would ſend for it to cut out the pattern. But, Mother, when they have got it cut out bit by bit, and put together ſtick by ſtick, they never, none of them, will look no more like my Lady than I ſhould look like the Queen of England, if I had one of her Majeſty's caſt crowns put upon my head.

I can't help telling you, dear Mother, that every thing now is called after my lady—Mrs. Roſe, while my lady the Ducheſs's milliner came here to-day with all ſorts of finery, fans, tippets, hats, caps, feathers, neck-laces, and ear-rings, every one of which

which was a *Montague!* Now, though I don't think it no ſin to be proud of this grand compliment, ſeeing it paid to *my* lady and not to *me*, yet I think it a ſin and a ſhame to call things that arnt chriſtians by chriſtian names!

Good gracious me! I had forgot myſelf, and here comes another meſſenger; ſo, dear Mother, no more at the preſent writing from your loving and dutiful daughter, till death,

JENNY ESTRIGE.

IT

IT is with confuſion of face that I, the Editor, am ſo often intruding on the merciful diſpoſitions of my indulgent Readers with ſome apology or other, either telling them a Canterbury-tale of my misfortunes, or a cock and bull ſtory of my negligence; but what are the conſequences of the former compared to the latter? I loſt half a ſcore letters, it was only a ſmall part of my delightful manuſcript, yet I lamented them ſorely; but what has happened ſince, is a thouſand times more vexatious. —Inſtead of a part miſlaid or ſtolen, the whole choice collection is now locked up—the key loſt,—no ſmith at hand to make another key—no hammer in the houſe to force the lock open—myſelf without hope —and my readers without patience!

To complete the ſcene of my diſtreſs, here has been my Printer's devil, who devours faſter than I can write, with a demand for twenty ſheets of copy before to-

morrow

morrow night. I told him the accident—he grumbled with a hoarſe, deep tone, Maſter ſtands ſtill—the work, he ſays, will not come out till Parliament riſes, and the town is empty.

Take theſe ſheets, ſaid I, go thy ways, call again for more at thy leiſure; and as far down as Mrs. Jenny Eſtrige's letter to her mother, I humbly gave to the devil.

He muttered ſomething about *paſt* employment in *great* families, and preſent buſineſs in public affairs, and ſaid he did not know when he ſhould find leiſure to come again.

As ſoon as the devil was gone about *other* folks' buſineſs, for I had none to detain him, I ſat down and ruminated on theſe myſtic expreſſions——

Parliament will be riſen, and the town empty.

And this will be the deſtruction of my book, cried I—more copy *muſt* be had at any rate. I fell to reſearching again for the key—tried to borrow a hammer of my neighbour—

neighbour—ſent once more for the ſmith—but neither key, hammer, or ſmith, was within the reach of my good luck.

It is only, ſaid I, to tell my dear ſympathiſing Readers of this *new* misfortune, they who are always ready to help a lame dog over the ſtile, will be contented with a narrative inſtead of letters, till a hammer or a ſmith can be procured; and I here promiſe that one or the other, if there be ſuch a thing as hammer, or ſmith above ground, ſhall be forth coming, to open this unlucky *patent* lock to-morrow, next day, or the day after at the very fartheſt.

Without any more preamble, I begin my narrative.——

Mrs. Jenny Eſtrige's letter is not a compoſition from which it is eaſy to cull bright thoughts and muſical ſounds to enrich our language; her ſtyle is not ſuch as would add to the fame of very wiſe men or very wiſe women, when they ſhoot flying to knock down applauſe. I know Burke would not adopt it, and a Siddons might refuſe

refuſe to give it the grace and pathos of a happy delivery. Nature, and nature only, who is an old ſchool-dame, had inſtructed Jenny in leſſons of erudition, and was ſo well ſatisfied with the performance of her pupil, that feeling ſomething like envy to ſee herſelf equalled, if not out-done, in deſcriptive talents, ſhe daſhed out the name of Jenny Eſtrige, added her own to the piece, and ſigned it *Simple Nature.*

I ſhall call the meek, ungrammared attendant on Miſs Montague the *leaſt* poliſhed, and Miſs Montague herſelf the *moſt* poliſhed child of that parent who ought to be the common mother of us all, though the family of Art, were their numbers to be counted, are much more conſiderable than the progeny of Nature.

It is impoſſible for any of her children to be more artleſs, tender, or honeſt, than Jenny; more natural, ſuſceptible, or correct, than Jenny's lovely miſtreſs. One is the gem which ignorance encruſteth; the other has acquired brilliancy by the chiſſel

chiſſel of education; yet are they both equally amenable to the mode and manner of nature, and will not put on a ribbon or a cap that threatens to diſtort in them, by reflection, the features of their progenitor.

Jenny ſpeaks only the truth, when ſhe tells her mother that every thing under the cover of a band-box muſt bear the name of Montague. Let it be conſidered, dear Reader, that Miſs Montague was at this very time not only the favourite of all men, but ſoon to be married to the favourite of all women; and it will not appear ſo *very* ſtrange that whatever cap or ribbon *ſhe* put on ſhould become the rage of faſhion, even amongſt the high bred, high fed, and higher taught, daughters of *ton*.

If there be any ſuch place as paradiſe below the ſkies, I ſhould expect to find it ſituated in the boſom of Miſs Montague; *there* flouriſhes the tree of knowledge, guarded by humility; *there* bloom in original ſtrength, unblaſted by the breath of

ſin,

ſin, vigorous and eternal, the roſes of modeſty, the white, unſullied lillies of pure imaginations; *there* honeſty fills up every corner, and heart's-eaſe wantons in luxurious profuſion; *there* broad rivers of charity occupy the ſpace of waters; *there* milk of human kindneſs flows from a thouſand ſprings and hidden ſources; *there* all is chearful, unclouded day; *there* the paſſions will not contend for maſtery with the rational being who is appointed to reign over them; and *there* royal conſcience walks his hourly rounds, tunes up his heaven-ſtrung harp, and warbles all is well!

Nothing could be more extravagant than the joy of Mr. Lexington, or more complete than the ſatisfaction of the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland, when the meſſenger returned from Riverſdale, on the third day of his abſence from town, with ſuch letters from Lady Auberry as were calculated not to depreſs but to exhilarate the happineſs and harmony of the expecting parties.

Each

Each perſon was, for a moment, employed in examining the contents of the particular diſpatches addreſſed to themſelves; Mary's letter was glanced over in an inſtant—it conſiſted only of theſe few lines——

"All the affection that my deareſt child "can beſtow on the tendereſt of lovers, "ſhall be placed to the account of thoſe "bleſſings which enriches the days of her "happy, thrice happy grandmother!"

Short as was this tender injunction, her eye had hardly glanced over it, or the paper received that preſſure from her lips which was always given to every thing that came from Lady Auberry, before ſhe ſaw at her ſide *that* lover who was the ſubject of her ladyſhip's recommendation. What he ſaid, it is not neceſſary that I ſhould repeat. All men are ardent, and Lexington is the moſt ardent of all men!

With a ſmile, that ſhewed the act of obedience ſhe was going to perform was not a forced one, ſhe gave him her hand—

I am

I am commanded, ſaid ſhe (her face ſuffuſed with bluſhes), to make you *this* preſent—if you ever repent accepting it, you muſt quarrel with Lady Auberry—remember it is not my fault.

And is Lady Auberry generous by halves only? or do you mean to keep the beſt part of her gift to yourſelf? I know very well, from what ſhe has the goodneſs to ſay to me, that you are commanded to give me your *heart* as well as your *hand*; and I inſiſt on being put into the quiet poſſeſſion of it, from this dear and fortunate moment!

What you aſk, ſaid ſhe, will not be worth your acceptance, till you learn to eſtimate its value better than you have done—the demand implys a doubt. That heart and that hand which do not go together belongs not to me: when I gave you the one I made no reſerve of the other.

The Duke and Ducheſs, who had now alſo gone through their epiſtles, joined them before the tranſported Lexington could

could expreſs, by words, the paſſionate emotions of his ſoul. I will have nothing to do with them—it is as eaſy to make a rope of ſand as to follow the current of a lover's raptures; for when they cannot force a paſſage through the lips, they will fly to the eyes, and there proclaim themſelves, in ſpite of all the reſtraints that forms and punctilio can lay them under.

The ſweet and ingenuous frankneſs with which ſhe received the compliments of her two noble friends, the returns of gratitude ſhe made them, and the unreſerve with which ſhe ſpoke of her own good fortune, endeared her more than ever to their hearts, and their careſſes were redoubled.

It is an abſolute fact that the Ducheſs did, as ſhe preſſed the cheek of her beautiful ward, drop a tear upon it, which it is more than probable was the firſt offering her eyes had ever made to the powers of ſenſibility.

Such is the magnet of lovelineſs, united to ſenſe, modeſty and condeſcenſion; it has

has the ſame effect on the human mind that age produces on the works of maſter painters: it ſoftens the ſtrongeſt colouring, and mellows every thing it touches.

A large dinner-party were, on this memorable day, to dine in Groſvenor-ſquare; the company invited conſiſted chiefly of the relations and connections of both families; the only exceptions were Mr. Trompſon and Lady Racket, of courſe their daughter could not be excluded; for, notwithſtanding the great progreſs Miſs Montague daily gained on the affections of her Grace, ſhe continued, though in rather a leſs degree, her former partiality for the gay, deſigning, inſidious Mrs. Oxburn.

If my Reader ſhould alſo find Mrs. Toovy at table, when he does not expect her, I have this apology to offer why I did not think it neceſſary to announce her, becauſe, from her conſtant appearance there, I might as well have told you that the carving-fork was placed at her Grace's left-hand, or the appern in the middle of the courſe,

courſe, which are events that happen every day.

Of whom the family and family connexions were compoſed, I ſhall make it my more ſerious buſineſs to explain; and as I call them over, thoſe who have not been ſufficiently ſpoken of by Miſs Montague in her letters to Lady Auberry, owing to her little ſkill in inveſtigating modern characters, by your leave, Reader, I ſhall preſent to you rather leſs diſguiſed than they commonly preſent themſelves.

I begin with Lady Jane Petworth, and ſhall treat her Ladyſhip as it is the *faſhion* to treat all *ſuch* ſort of ineſtimable beings, paſs over the fine qualities of her head and her heart, without praiſe and without notice.

She did not increaſe the circle by bringing with her Miſs Forteſcue, though the Ducheſs had condeſcended to hint that ſhe might come if ſhe would, that young Lady was gone to ſpend the day with her aunt, the Marchioneſs of Stars, and her couſins,

the Ladies Langtons, who, though they had not burthened her before with too much notice, were grown, of late, exceedingly fond of her ſociety, and thought that morning or that day miſpent, which did not bring them together; *particularly* ſince the report began to be blazed abroad that Miſs Montague was certainly to be the wife of Mr. Lexington, who would as certainly be the Duke of Cleveland.

It was, to be ſure, with the deſire of having this agreeable news confirmed, that brought about this change in the Marchioneſs of Stars and her grown-up daughters, who never could bring themſelves to believe the thing was poſſible. What elſe could it be, which made them all at once ſo cordially diſpoſed towards their long-neglected and very pretty relation?

Another perſon there was, who, though not equally incredulous about this union, ſaw it in nearly the ſame point of view in which it appeared to the Marchioneſs, the

Lady

Lady Langtons, and all the extenſive circle of their unmarried friends, namely, that Mr. Lexington might have beſtowed himſelf better, at leaſt more to their ſatisfaction.

Why Lord Francis Lexington ſhould be as averſe to this marriage as the Marchioneſs of Stars, is what I muſt endeavour to account for, before I introduce any other part of the company expected to dine in Groſvenor-ſquare, on the 2d of March, 17—, which date my readers will be ſo good to remember, as it may yet be long to the hour of ſitting down to table.

If Lady Jane Petworth's letters to Lady Auberry are remembered, and ſuch letters ſhould never be forgotten, it will be found by them, that the Duke of Cleveland and Colonel Montague, the father of Mary, lived together in habits of affection from their boyiſh days, founded firſt on the connection formed between the father of one of the parties and the mother of the other, but eſtabliſhed more firmly afterwards by

a ſtrong ſimilarity in their honourable purſuits, and in the eſſential traits of their amiable diſpoſitions.

Neither of the younger brothers had partaken very largely of this fraternal ſort of friendſhip—Lord Henry had early turned his thoughts to the attainment of military glory, or he might have been admitted as a moſt worthy partaker of it. Lady Jane has told you the pecuniary difficulties under which he long laboured, and that they only ended with his life. I have nothing that can add to the melancholy detail—all the information that it is in my power to give, amounts to no more than an act of juſtice, which obliges me to declare what could not be told by any other body, *viz.* that though the Marquis was as much ſtraitened in his finances as either of his younger brothers, and though Mr. Montague's allowance as a minor, was equally limited, yet every thing they could do was privately done to aſſiſt Lord Henry. And when the Duke ſucceeded to his

his father, though Henry could not be recalled to life, his Grace's munificence to the three orphan children this noble, unfortunate ſoldier left behind him, will be a laſting record of his bounty and of his humanity.

Lord Francis Lexington, I have ſaid, was not received into the fraternal compact, which bound together the Marquis and Montague, nor had he any ambition to be ſo diſtinguiſhed; it was more conſonant to his taſte and inclinations that thoſe hours they paſſed in ſtudy or field exerciſe, ſhould be ſpent by him in purſuit of his pleaſures or his intereſt; one, though not the only, yet a principal ſource from which he drew the former, was a favourite miſtreſs.—She was a pretty, country girl, and innocent, before he ſeduced her. I do not ſay the difficulty with which he attained the conqueſt added fame to his other long liſt of ſeductions; and yet he eſteemed it of greater value than any of the reſt, and I am going

to give you his reaſons for ſo ſtrange a preference.——

They, for ſo I ſhall diſtinguiſh the fallen females who have not moved in the ſphere of ignorance or poverty, *they* were independent of his inſtructions or his patronage.—This poor girl was a perfect novice, and the poſſeſſor of no more than two gowns, one for every day and one for ſundays.—*They* were received into their *own* great world and by their own *great* friends, who do not much diſcountenance vice, provided it never comes amongſt them without a veil upon her face. *She* was driven from ſociety, and hooted at by all the decent inhabitants of her native hamlet, where vice will alſo ſometimes force herſelf, but is baniſhed from the humble roof as ſoon as her odious countenance is diſcovered. *They* are not aſhamed of any thing but being found out in their intrigues, and can contemplate the author of their fall from virtue with unbluſhing effrontery. *She* feared nothing ſo much as the reproofs

of

of her own conſcience, and was covered with confuſion whenever her eyes met thoſe of her betrayer.

Thus have I drawn a contraſt between characters that, in the general acceptation, are erroneouſly thought not diſſimilar; and muſt beg leave to make a much larger allowance of charitable ſentiments for the victims of ignorance, perhaps of neceſſity, than for thoſe who offer themſelves the willing ſacrifices to faſhionable proſtitution. Surely, if it was not for the lenity of the *times*, the ſame ſentiment would act on every other mind as it does on my own, and ſplendid ſituations, inſtead of being an apology for ſin, would mark out the daughters of education as exemplary ſubjects for the finger of contempt to point at.

This ſame poor, little, country girl, who I only drew from the ſhade of retirement to confront with *impures* in a more *elevated* ſituation, was ſecreted by Lord Francis Lexington in the dark, ſecond floor of an

humble ſeller of cheeſe, butter, eggs, and a little of all ſorts, ſomewhere in the environs of St. Giles's. The old woman of this ſcrap ſhop, happened to be a good ſort of old woman; and as Lord Francis never viſited his dulcinea but under a borrowed name, a borrowed character, and in a coat that an Iſraelite, of the greateſt honour, would have thought dear at three ſhillings, the dealer believed they were married ſure enough; and, as ſhe uſed to tell her goſſiping neighbours, man and wife to all intents and purpoſes.

This new intrigue was contrived with ſo much addreſs, and kept ſo cloſe, that it never has taken air, or been wafted through the regions of faſhion, till I thought fit to make it accountable for ſome after-tranſactions, which would be, otherwiſe, not eaſily underſtood.

The only fruits of this illicit, never-revealed connection was one daughter; and though nothing could equal the privacy with which mother and child was concealed

cealed from all enquiring eyes, except the parſimony with which his Lordſhip ſupported them, yet, with the ſtrongeſt exertions of œconomy, he ſoon found the expences of his half-ſtarved family too heavy a burthen on his narrow paternal pittance to be borne with the leaſt tolerable convenience.

Being at no time ſo infatuated by paſſion as to forget his *intereſt*, frequent calculations made him, at laſt, turn his thoughts on marriage, as the very beſt market to which he could carry his handſome perſon, his high rank, and his gentleman-like neceſſities.

He was really and undeniably handſome; his features well turned, his countenance open, his eyes lively, his teeth remarkably white, his ſmile enchanting, and his figure irreſiſtible. The manners of Lord Francis were all of the ſame ſeducing complexion as his perſonal qualifications—mild, ſoft, inſinuating, plauſible; and had they bore any ſort of relationſhip to

his ſoul, he would certainly have been what Miſs Montague pronounced him, and what all the world would have pronounced him, who did not know him better than herſelf, a very charming man.

But, alas! I have to lament that his manners were no more of kindred to his ſoul than his ſoul was allied to honour, probity or ſincerity. He had the ſhadow of all virtues without the ſubſtance of one, which, in an age of ſhadows, will paſs; but a time muſt come when the ſubſtance only will ſtand the teſt of more than mortal ſcrutiny.

Roſe, ſaid he to his favourite miſtreſs, whoſe name was Roſina, I am going to look out for a wife. Are you, my Lord, ſhe meekly replied, and was ſilent.

He looked on her face and ſaw it bathed with tears, which fell on the infant that ſlept ſweetly at her boſom, and wetted her's alſo; ſhe had juſt taken it from the coarſe cradle, which ſtood at her ſide, to perform the duties of a mother—theſe

duties

duties it would not be much longer in her power to perform—ſhe was in the laſt ſtage of a rapid conſumption.

Lord Francis, I have told you, was remarkably fond of his little protegee, and, on this occaſion gave her, what, in his opinion, amounted to the tendereſt proof of his unſhaken affection, by aſſuring her he would chooſe the uglieſt woman he could find, whoſe fortune was equal to his wants, the benefits of which *prudent* ſtep, ſhould be as much her's as his own. "You "can never be jealous (ſaid he), of *ſuch* "a wife as I ſhall make choice of: She "ſhall not poſſeſs *one* beauty or *one* good "quality, if I can help it, to give you un-"eaſineſs. The *convenient* match I have "in my eye, is a widow half blind, "half drunk, and more than half a "fool; but has ſuch confounded ſums "of healing gold in her power, as will "make all whole: and the devil himſelf, "if he was to ſee my widow, would not

" accuſe me of laying out any love in the " purchaſe."

Roſina heard his defence with great mildneſs, and not leſs ſubmiſſion; but when he called upon her the next day, ſhe was gone, not dead, but received into that firſt and greateſt of all charitable inſtitutions, the Magdalen Hoſpital, where the earlieſt ſpring of piety is guarded from the dangerous blaſt of example, ſtrengthened by inſtruction, and nouriſhed by kindneſs; where the leſſons of penitence are not inculcated with ſtripes and ſcourges, and where hundreds of other penitents, as well as Roſina, have, or may, cloſe their eyes for everlaſting ſleep with joyful hopes, who might, in any other ſituation, have yielded up their laſt perception in all the horrors of deſpair.

The good old woman, who was often Roſina's companion in the abſence of Lord Francis, ſaw, with ſorrow, the fatal decline into which ſhe had fallen; and, happily for the invalid, poſſeſſed too little delicacy

licacy to hide either her own concern or the occaſion of it, from the ſufferer herſelf. This timely knowledge of the danger that threatened her was the firſt ſtep to reflection—reflection produced a ſigh of regret, and a ſilent wiſh that it was poſſible to amend the errors of her paſt conduct; that wiſh was ſucceded by inclination to enter on the trial, and as the firſt ſtep towards it, with all the humiliation of a mind deeply oppreſſed by the weight of its own guilt, ſhe confeſſed to her aſtoniſhed friend, that ſhe was not the wife of the man who had viſited her as ſuch ever ſince ſhe had been her lodger.

Notwithſtanding our good ſhop-keeper was a truly religious, virtuous creature, ſhe was not outrageouſly ſevere againſt the tranſgreſſions of her neighbour. Was I to hold up a precedent from no better authority than from this worthy plebeian, and deſire my fair readers to give it their ſerious conſideration, I ſhould expect to have my requeſt treated with deriſion; but

but the firſt lady of quality who gives me reaſon to ſuppoſe ſhe has as much lenity towards her neighbour as this vender of ſmall wares, I ſhall certainly bring it forward again, and ſtrongly recommend it as an example worthy to be followed.

Roſina, when ſhe made the diſcovery of her own ſituation, carefully concealed the name and rank of her deſtroyer, whilſt ſhe, to whom it was made, had no ſuſpicions that led her to ſuppoſe he was any thing above the condition he choſe to adopt, or enough of irritable curioſity to excite farther enquiries.

Finding her young lodger inclined to turn away from the road of vice, if ſhe did but know in what path to wander without the aid of her ſeducer, and where ſhe could be ſafe from the purſuit ſhe feared he would make after her—this true friend not only ſpoke to her of the Magdalen Hoſpital, but procured her a book of its laws and inſtitutions, which had been the ſubject of her ſtudies, gratitude and admiration

ration for a fortnight, prior to her laſt converſation with Lord Francis.

It was through the kind endeavours of her poor, but benevolent benefactreſs, that ſhe found a ready admittance into the calm abode of penitence and peace. When ſhe ſaw, for the laſt time, the deſtructive enemy of her repoſe—it was on a Wedneſday; the fortunate day of her releaſe from the bondage of a vicious connection ſucceeded to it. She had appeared before the Governors on the Thurſday before, and was accepted with that exceſs of humanity that ſtrengthened her good reſolutions, and made the parting from her infant, the moment of her ſevereſt trial, leſs horrible than it was tender and pathetic.

I ſhall not harrow up your ſouls, my Readers, with the repreſentation of this laſt ſcene. It is enough for your information that I ſhould tell you the child was left in the care of the old woman, who was to preſent it to its father, with a note very badly written, and worſe ſpelt, to ſay where

where ſhe had taken ſhelter for the ſhort remainder of her days, to recommend the child to his protection, and to requeſt that it might not be removed from its preſent ſituation, as, by means of her friend, ſhe ſhould, as long as her life laſted, be informed weekly of the dear baby's welfare.

The foundations of ſtrong caſtles will totter at the convulſion of an earthquake, and ſouls impenetrable to the blaſt of heavy ſtorms that may be ſeen gathering at a diſtance, will bend under a leſs ſhock when it comes upon them by ſurpriſe.

Lord Francis had long ſeen the declining ſtate of his Miſtreſs's health, and could even contemplate her haſty approaches to the gates of death with ſtoic philoſophy; but no ſooner was his Lordſhip informed that ſhe had withdrawn herſelf from his protection, before the *final* ſummons arrived, than he felt, or fancied he felt, all the horrors of frenzy!

He bewailed his ſad deſtiny in ſtrains ſo lamentable as to draw tears from the old woman,

woman, in whoſe ſight he had been the moment before, in her own language, no better than he ſhould be.

Every thing Roſina had aſked of him, he promiſed to grant—preſſed the infant to his breaſt—called upon the name of her mother by the appellation of his ungrateful Roſina—threw the child from him in a paroxiſm of rage—walked madly about the chamber—held his clinched fiſt at his forehead—left the houſe in agonies not to be deſcribed—went home—dreſſed—examined his mirror—recalled his baniſhed ſmiles—ſaw that compoſure was reſtored to his countenance—opened his lips, that his teeth might be ſeen to advantage—ſtepped into his chariot—drove to the opera—bruſhed into the box that contained his widow—plied her with flattery in the firſt act—with the tendereſt of all love-ſpeeches in the ſecond—laid himſelf and all his *poverty* at her feet—and, in two days after, without the trouble of ſigning or ſealing, became her lord; and what was

more

more to his ſatisfaction, uncontrouled maſter of her whole fortune, which might have been an object for any man's ambition to graſp at, whoſe claims on rank were below that of royalty.

Lady Francis was a mighty prudent woman in regard to her worldly affairs; and in the two days that elapſed from the delightful ſounds of the opera to the ſolemn ceremony of the church, ſhe had ventured to hint a very generous intention of preſenting him with one hundred thouſand pounds, about the fifth part of her poſſeſſions, as a nuptial preſent, and having the other four ſecured to her own uſe.

But Lord Francis, the moſt paſſionate of lovers, could not wait the tedious time of adjuſting theſe ſort of arrangements. Beſides, Lord Francis was alſo the moſt delicate of mankind; he was hurt by a propoſal that ſeemed to imply a doubt of his *honour*, ſuch as that *ſhe* who governed his whole ſoul's intire ſtock of affection, ſhould think it neceſſary to draw her happineſs,

pineſs, or ſecure her advantages independent of his endeavours to promote both the one and the other.

The widow was deeply ſmitten; and what could the widow do? Has it ever yet been told, that in a conteſt between the paſſions and the prudence of a widow, prudence got the upper hand? I believe not. I am ſure it gained no ſuch victory in the preſent inſtance. And here let me do juſtice to Lord Francis, the whiteſt trait in whoſe fame I might conceal, if I did not make a conſcience of giving *every* body what is due to them. I ſcorn, therefore, to leave a blank which may be filled up to his Lordſhip's advantage, in telling my Readers, that being not only in the poſſeſſion of the widow, but of the widow's mite alſo, he nevertheleſs continues, to this day, a polite huſband. Nor will I throw a blot over this fair part of the page, by animadverting on the ſweets of three thouſand a year enjoyed by Lady Francis, being the jointure of a late huſband, and

ſo

ſo ſecured as not to be touched by any future one, unleſs by conſent of the Lady herſelf; and that power redeemable at pleaſure.

Lord Francis did not ſeparate the child from its protectreſs till two years after the death of poor Roſina, which happened in ſomething more than eight months from her paſſing through the gates of benevolence, which are in the immediate road to heaven, and never ſhut againſt thoſe who are willing to enter—her tranſlation was, doubtleſs, a happy one—her laſt breath quavered on the bright pinions of Faith, Hope cheared it, and Charity received it.

The noble father of the young Roſina continued his viſits and the diſguiſe under which he was accuſtomed to make them; he augmented the pay of the old woman a little, and would have been ſtill more bountiful, but from the fear that his bounty might be the means of betraying him. His aſſumed name was Campell-

ford

ford, and he paſſed for a ſubordinate officer of exciſe.

His grief for the death of the mother, bore no proportion to his fondneſs for the child; he thought her, as ſhe really was, the moſt beautiful of all infants; before ſhe could walk alone, he diſcovered that her movements predicted ſhe would not be leſs majeſtic than beautiful; and, at the firſt ſounds of articulation, he was gratified to hear that command and haughtineſs mingled with her language. It was impoſſible his Lady ſhould bring him children: this then was to be the child of his hopes, and the adopted heireſs of his ſtupendous fortune, but without knowing even the name of her protector, or what right ſhe had to his protection, till the whole of his concerted plan ſhould be executed, or at leaſt ripe for execution.

His brother, the Duke of Cleveland, had been married twelve months to the preſent Ducheſs; he had no child by his former marriage, nor did this promiſe to be

be more fruitful. Who then was to be the oſtenſible heir to a title on which he ſet no little value?—It was Henry Lexington, juſt arrived in England, the admiration of all beholders, and only three years older than his darling Roſina!

Many agreeable reveries did theſe conſiderations give birth to, and many a kiſs, in the rapture of his heart, has he beſtowed on the future Ducheſs of Cleveland. The more his thoughts were occupied how to bring about what he was determined, by ſome means or other, to accompliſh, the more reaſon he ſaw to conceal from the whole world, as well as from Roſina, the illegitimacy of her birth, as *that* bar would be, of itſelf, ſufficient to defeat all the plans cunning could lay down, or diligence execute, to place her at the head of a houſe ſo great, ſo truly honourable, as that from which he had ſprung.

His mind, impregnated with theſe truths, which appeared, and in reality were incon-

incontrovertible, he thought young as his daughter then was, having ſcarce turned the mid-way of her third year, ſhould *he* any longer indulge himſelf with the ſight of her, ſhe might retain on her impreſſive memory ſuch traces of his perſon, and ſuch recollections of his fondneſs for her, that, in future, would probably be attended with no pleaſant conſequences.

Deterred by conſiderations ſo weighty, he ſlackened his viſits to Roſina, and formed the reſolution of ſending her out of the kingdom with all poſſible expedition; but not chooſing to employ any perſon who was an inhabitant of this country, on ſo intricate a buſineſs, he diſpatched a letter to his wine-merchant, one Mellows, who was ſettled at Liſbon, and, beſides being his Lordſhip's favourite at ſchool on account of his pliant diſpoſition, had ſerved his table with excellent wine ever ſince the lady who preſided at it had furniſhed him with means.

When

When Lord Francis wrote to requeſt his friend would come over to Britain, he did not hint on what occaſion he wanted him, only deſired he would be as private as he could, and pretend, if any body enquired what brought him to England, that he came on his own affairs.

Mellows, proud to receive his Lordſhip's commands, made haſte to obey them. Several private interviews took place, and my Lord repoſed in the honeſt merchant every ſort of confidence, *that* only excepted which he was pre-determined neither man, woman or child ſhould ever poſſeſs, I mean the ſecret of his being the father of Roſina.

The ſtory he framed for the ear of his confidant was this—She was, he ſaid, the daughter of a ſplendid houſe, the fruit of a lawful marriage, and heireſs of immenſe property, but without parents, her's having fallen a ſacrifice to family pride; that to prevent the orphan from coming under the ſame cruel fate, it was neceſſary ſhe ſhould

ſhould be brought up not only in total ignorance of her birth, but in another country, that her father's relations, who were the moſt implacable of all human beings, might not be able to trace out her reſidence; and, difficult as the taſk would be, he had undertaken it at the earneſt requeſt of her father, who was dearer to him than all the other friends he ever had or ever ſhould have.

Mellows was effectually deceived—admired his Lordſhip's goodneſs of heart—hoped his efforts would be ſucceſsful, and with no bad grace, made a tender of his ſervices to the very utmoſt extent of his abilities. Lord Francis, who had long before drawn out a ſketch of the plan by which he intended to proceed, immediately put it into the hands of his aſſiſting agent, who, having peruſed it with much attention, gave his fulleſt approbation to the contents.

"This paper, my friend," ſaid Lord Francis, "informs you of little more than

" the route by which you are to conduct
" your young charge to the place I have
" deſtined for her abode, till all the
" troubles are done away, which, at pre-
" ſent, bear a very threatening aſpect.

" I have told you (continued he), that
" her fortune will be immenſe; but before
" ſome eſſential points are ſettled, ſhe
" muſt be entirely dependent on *me*,
" which, for the ſake of *my* own domeſtic
" peace, as well as for the ſafety of the
" child, it is neceſſary to manage with the
" greateſt circumſpection, otherwiſe I
" ſhould be tormented by my Wife, who
" is, like all other women, inclined to
" jealouſy, and Roſina would infallibly
" be diſcovered by her family. My name,
" therefore, muſt not appear in any one
" part of the whole tranſaction. You
" ſhall adopt the guardianſhip of my
" Ward; and all the remittances that I
" make for her uſe, may be negociated in
" your name; or, in caſe of death, by
" ſome other perſon, appointed by your-
" ſelf,

" ſelf, in whom you can confide for the " true diſcharge of a truſt ſo important.

" All I expect to be informed of, and " that in the moſt private way you can " deviſe, is the progreſs of her health, " beauty, and accompliſhments, once in " two years, and ſent to me immediately " after you have ſeen her at theſe ap- " pointed times I have ſpecified in my " paper of written directions."

Here his Lordſhip pauſed to take breath, and Mellows teſtified his readineſs to obey all his injunctions, but looked as if he had yet ſomething to ſay, if he could uſe the freedom of ſaying it.

Lord Francis ſaw the ſuppreſſed queſtion hover on his lips, and aſked if he had any thing to propoſe which might be more agreeable to himſelf, or anſwer a better general end than the ſyſtem he had laid down, which it was not yet too late to mend, if it could be amended.

" Nothing in the world, my Lord," replied the timid merchant, " but I ſup-

" poſe the young lady is born of Pro-
" teſtant parents?"

" O yes, I believe ſo," returned the great man, with an air of the moſt perfect indifference; " but, prithee, Mellows,
" what makes thee aſk ſuch a parſon-like
" queſtion?"

" Becauſe I ſhould ſuppoſe her princi-
" ples of faith might be endangered, by
" ſending her, as you mean to do, in a
" ſtate of infancy to a nurſery in Italy.
" I hardly ſee how ſhe can poſſibly
" eſcape being a catholic.——Excuſe my
" freedom, my Lord, but this ſeems a
" matter of ſome ſolid objection."

" Tuſh (ſaid his Lordſhip), what ſig-
" nifies the religion of a handſome girl?
" Let them make a Roman Catholic of
" her if they will; we ſhall only have to
" unmake her, when ſhe comes back to
" her own country. So let her take her
" chance—go ſhe muſt; for if ſhe ſtays
" here, a worſe fate will befal her—a

" nurſery

" nurſery in Italy is her only place of " ſafety."

Here the converſation, which was beginning to take a ſerious turn, for want of argument, or for want of reſolution on the merchant's part to ſupport it any longer, fell back into its former channel, and was reſumed by his Lordſhip in the following words.—

" When you ſettle the terms of recep- " tion for my Ward, at the nurſery I " have pointed out to you, with the Lady " Abbeſs of which I was a little acquaint- " ed on my tour to the Continent, and " knew her to be a woman of the firſt " faſhion, erudition, taſte, and polite- " neſs; I ſay, when you place Roſina un- " der her protection, you are to repreſent " the caſe as it really is, and as I have re- " preſented it to you, with this only dif- " ference, that inſtead of *my* being her " ſuppoſed guardian, or any ways in- " tereſted about her, *you* muſt entirely " take that part of the buſineſs on your-

" ſelf. But as ſhe is *intended* to fill one " of the *firſt* ſtations in this country, " ſhe ſhall begin her career of ſplendor " from the time ſhe becomes the pupil of " Madame ———. I ſhall therefore rely " on you, my friend, to ſee that her eſta- " bliſhment, in regard to equipage and " attendants, is equal to that of a petit " princeſs. You cannot, in anyof theſe " articles be too laviſh, or in donations to " her protectreſs too liberal, either for my " purſe or my inclinations.

" Madame ——— ſhould alſo be in- " formed that Roſina is, by nature, if I " am not very much deceived, haughty " and ambitious; which noble qualities of " a great ſoul, I ſhall *inſiſt* upon it are " cheriſhed, by complying with all her " wiſhes, rather than oppoſed by preach- " ing, or thwarted by contradiction.

" One female ſervant only ſhall attend " her on the voyage, and *ſhe* muſt not be " ſuffered to land in Italy, but return " back in the ſhip which carries you there.

" Such

" Such an one, fit for the purpoſe, I " would have you engage as ſoon as you " can, and let her wait at your lodgings " till the moment you are to embark and " go down the river; you will then fetch " the child from her preſent nurſe, and " confide it to her care till you land, " when you are to hire a native of the " country to go with you on the journey, " who may be retained as one of the three " attendants that muſt be appointed " for her eſtabliſhment; *or*, ſhe may be " diſcharged on your arrival at the Con- " vent, as you ſhall think moſt eligible."

What further inſtructions were to be given at this or any after confidential interview, is not neceſſary to be told; enough has been ſaid of the plan laid down by Lord Francis for the education of the little *embrio* Ducheſs of Cleveland, to give my Readers a tolerable good gueſs of his full intentions, perhaps even more than it is for the intereſt of my hiſtory ſhould be

explained, or than I am willing to inform them.

This weighty affair being ſettled much to the internal peace of Lord Francis, and the lovely Roſina flying before the wind on her voyage to Naples, the firſt port at which her conductor had orders to land his golden fleece, the anxious father now directed the whole of his endeavours to obtain more than an *uncle*'s ſhare in the affections of his elegant nephew, who returned his intereſted careſſes with as *much*, yet not *more* dutiful reſpect than thoſe plain, honeſt marks of approbation, which the Duke beſtowed upon him, when in fact he deſerved them, but not on *all* occaſions, as did the ſcheming Lord Francis.

The letters he received from Mr. Mellows, which were, by his own directions, no more than ſix in twice the ſame number of years, were all fraught with ſuch aſtoniſhing accounts of his daughter's wonderful attractions, both perſonal and mental, that when it was propoſed by the Duke

to

to his brother to ſend Mr. Lexington, at the age of twenty, to enter on the grand tour, Lord Francis, one year before that time arrived, took a trip to Liſbon, under the pretence of ſome ſlight indiſpoſition, which did not require the attendance of his Lady in the capacity of either *nurſe* or *phyſician*; though in both characters, particularly the latter, ſhe was always teazingly officious when any thing ailed her poor, dear Francy; but ſhe had fortunately ſo ſtrong a dread of croſſing the water, that her importunities to go with him were eaſily over-ruled.

On this ſecret expedition, the beſt companions of his Lordſhip's voyage were letters of credit on a banker, at Milan, for twenty thouſand pounds, which, as ſoon as he landed, were put into the hands of his confidental friend, the merchant.

In all his tranſactions with this gentleman, he had not only been punctual but generous, for which reaſon it was impoſſible Mr. Mellows could refuſe any requeſt

made to him by his patron, otherwiſe that which he now came in perſon to ſolicit, might probably have been rejected, as it was ſoon to be attended with many inconveniencies.

" My good friend," ſaid the ſpecious Lord Francis, " there is not another man " but yourſelf on whom I can lay hold as " my ſheet-anchor in all difficult caſes; " nor am I unmindful of your intereſt—I " do not forget that in the midſt of all my " own perplexities, I have the pleaſure to " tell you I have got you appointed Con- " ſul at this place, and am the firſt to wiſh " you joy of your good fortune."

Here was a maſter ſtroke of policy, which cut in all poſſible directions!—it paid a debt of gratitude for *paſt* ſervices—it cleared the way to *new* ones—*and* placed the humble merchant in a medium of rank better fitted to ſerve the purpoſes for which his aſſiſtance was abſolutely neceſſary.

Lord Francis made very polite returns to the tranſported acknowledgments ſuch a favour

a favour demanded. It was an honour, it was a happineſs of which he was totally unworthy. But not to diſgrace his noble patron, he ſhould try to acquit the truſt repoſed in him with faithfulneſs, diligence, due humility to the *Crown*, and everlaſting ſubmiſſion to his Lordſhip!

" I only aſk the continuance of your " friendſhip (my Lord replied), I have no " claims on your ſubmiſſion; your paſt " ſervices ſets you on a footing, in my eſti- " mation, not below thoſe whoſe ſitua- " tions may be more upon an equality " with my own. But, my dear Mellows, " if by procuring this appointment I give " you pleaſure, I am going to put it in " your power to return it to me in ſatiſ- " faction ſeven-fold!"

Had his Lordſhip committed an act of atrocity, for which the laws of his country condemned him to ſuffer death, ſo warm, ſo over-flowing was the new Conſul's gratitude, that I queſtion if he would not, on ſuch an occaſion, have offered to become

his ſubſtitute; and, to have ſaved my Lord's neck, have ſlipped his own into the collar! Can it therefore be doubted that he liſtened with complacency, whilſt Lord Francis unfolded the miſſion on which he meant to employ him, or that he joyfully aſſented to conduct the buſineſs with all his addreſs, and through all its retrograde movements.

" I have (ſaid his Lordſhip), procured " you leave of abſence from your poſt for " ſix or eight months, in which time you " will make a voyage to Italy, and take " Roſina out of her convent. But prior " to her removal from thence, ſecure for " her reception the moſt capital houſe " that is vacant in Milan, and let it be fur- " niſhed in a ſtile of magnificence, that " like herſelf---like what you aſſure me is " the ſtyle of her own perfections, both " they and their miſtreſs ſtand unrivalled " in the ſight of all *amateurs*, whether of " *ſplendor* or of *beauty*.

The

The Conſul bowed—the Conſul ſmiled —and his patron continued——

" I would have you alſo engage in the " double capacity of *chaperone* and ſuper- " intendant of her family, ſome elderly " woman of rank and high connections, " whoſe finances may make ſuch a ſitua- " tion not only advantageous but eligible. " There are always enough of poor, de- " cayed nobility in *every* clime, particu- " larly on the *Continent*, who would be " honoured by ſuch a propoſal; *ſo* that " you will have no difficulty in finding " more than one of the deſcription we " want. There are many who will offer " themſelves to your choice, but remem- " ber the perſon you chooſe for this office " of ſuperintendant muſt be of exalted " rank, even if her years ſhould be fewer, " or her ſkill in domeſtic management " leſs; any thing I would rather ſhould " be given up than *birth*—Birth, Mr. " Mellows, *birth* I cannot diſpenſe with;

" every

" every other ſmaller convenience muſt
" yield to this *great* conſideration.

" I moreover mean that you ſhall com-
" pliment the lady who becomes the com-
" panion of Roſina with a hundred pounds
" a quarter, as long as her attendance is
" required. It is a ſum that would be
" equal to the demands of an Italian
" Princeſs, and I ſhould not ſuppoſe it
" *well* beſtowed if it does not purchaſe us
" a Counteſs at *leaſt*. On no conſidera-
" tion let her be one of that ſort who is
" forgotten by the *world*, or laid by as out
" of *date* or *faſhion*. Roſina's *chaperone*
" muſt be entitled, by her own connec-
" tions, to bring my Ward forward in the
" higheſt circles."

Whilſt Lord Francis was giving theſe *particular* directions, Mellows made minutes of them in his pocket-book, very much to his Lordſhip's ſatisfaction, who, deſiring to look over that part only which concerned his orders about the Rank of Roſina's companion, declared it to be the exact

exact tranſcript of his meaning, and proceeded to enlarge on the ſubject, which had ſo well employed the ready and ſwift pencil of his friend, the Conſul.

" Though I have brought with me, and " depoſited in your hands, letters of credit " for twenty thouſand pounds, it is not " with the deſign of limiting your ex- " pences—*no*, they are without *limitation*; " enlarge them to what ſcale you pleaſe, " they *ſhall* be anſwered. Here is alſo a " caſket of jewels, give them to Roſina, " tell her they belong to her, and were " the *purchaſe* of her father. Should ſhe " wiſh to make additions to them, as it is " probable ſhe may, bid her not fear that " ſhe will offend her guardian by ſo doing, " and to what amount ſhe pleaſes: but " remember it muſt be Mr. Mellows, and " *not* Lord Francis Lexington, who is to " repreſent the guardian alluded to.

" I give you no certain directions as to " the arrangements of her equipages, ſuite " and wardrobe; only I recommend it to " your

" your conſideration that you cannot poſ-
" ſibly be *too* profuſe in theſe articles, *or*
" in the domeſtic expences of her houſe-
" hold: and now, my friend (he added),
" cloſe your memorandum book, I ſhall
" load it with no more commiſſions.

The Conſul did as he was directed, and again lent his whole attention, in ſilent admiration of the wonderful greatneſs and goodneſs of his noble patron, whilſt the noble patron himſelf began, in this manner, further to unfold his well-wove tiſſue of art and ſtratagem.

" In the breaſt of a friend ſo long tried,
" ſo faithful, ſo worthy of truſt, I ſhall
" not repoſe my confidence by halves,
" but having told you my plan of taking
" Roſina from her convent, I will can-
" didly tell *you* what are my motives, and
" and though they *are* and ever will be
" covered to all the world but yourſelf, I
" ſhall not think my ſecret leſs ſecure for
" explaining the whole of my intentions
" to *you* without diſguiſe.

" Roſina's

" Roſina's expectations are not circum-
" ſcribed within a leſs circle than one-
" third beyond the half of one million
" ſterling—I have a *Nephew* who muſt alſo
" inherit the high fortunes and higher
" honours of his family. Roſina is dear
" to me from the habits of intimacy on
" which I lived with her *Father*—my Ne-
" phew has ſtill nearer claims by conſan-
" guinity. It is, therefore, highly natu-
" ral that I ſhould wiſh to ſee theſe two
" objects of my affections united——and
" what, you will aſk, is there to prevent
" this union?

" Indeed I ſhould (replied the Conſul),
" if I could have taken the liberty to in-
" terrupt your Lordſhip."

" Why then, I will tell you, Mellows,
" —my brother, the Duke, would rather
" his titles ſhould be extinct, and his
" eſtates go to an hoſpital, than that *his*
" heir ſhould marry into *that* family from
" which Roſina is deſcended, though in
" every reſpect as diſtinguiſhed and as
" opulent

" opulent as his own; yet I muſt acknow-
" ledge the cauſe of this ſtrange diſguſt is
" not without *ſome* ſort of foundation in
" reaſon, but *that* is his *own* buſineſs, and
" I ſhall avoid any confidential diſco-
" veries that do not immediately concern
" myſelf. It is enough that I aſſure you
" I am in no manner bound by the *ſame*
" prejudices; on the contrary, I am de-
" termined my Nephew *ſhall* be the huſ-
" band of my Ward. It has ever been
" with a view to this connection that I
" have cauſed her to be brought up in a
" foreign country, where her perſon and
" manners receive every advantage, and
" her birth cannot be diſcovered.

" I have carried my projections ſtill fur-
" ther, for when this match, ſo wonderfully
" advantageous for my Nephew, is abſo-
" ſolutely concluded, as I mean it ſhall
" be, in defiance of the Duke's old piques,
" which ought long ago to have ſubſided,
" though I doubt they never will ſubſide,
" I ſay, when I have brought my ſcheme

" to

" to perfection, as long as my brother " lives, the ſecret of whoſe daughter Ro- " ſina is *muſt* be preſerved; for which " reaſon, I chooſe ſhe ſhall be a *reputed* " Italian lady—and this puts me in mind " that the moſt *material* part of your di- " rections have been omitted, ſo take out " your pocket-book, and make this me- " morandum—that you are to procure for " Roſina a Marqueſite, before ſhe is " brought from the nurſery.

" You will now," ſaid his Lordſhip, the additional memorandum being inſert- ed, " pretty well underſtand the nature of " that negociation on which you are going " to enter. My Nephew will begin his " travels in ten months—Milan is the " place at which all our young men chooſe " to ſpend a greater portion of their time " than either at Paris, Naples, or Rome, " becauſe there are certainly more native " beauties, and more incitements to plea- " ſure, than is to be met with in either " of theſe more overgrown but leſs cap-

" tivating

" tivating cities; and it is for this reaſon
" that I have preferred Milan to all other
" ſituations for the reſidence of Roſina,
" and the ſtage on which we ſhall com-
" mence our ſcene of action.

" The charms, grace, and accompliſh-
" ments you tell me ſhe is poſſeſſed of,
" together with her partiality for the Eng-
" liſh language, and the purity with which
" ſhe ſpeaks it, cannot fail to make her a
" magnet of conſiderable attraction to all
" Britiſh travellers; but *that* is not *my*
" object, you muſt prevent her from being
" ſeen *till* the arrival of Lexington at Mi-
" lan, which, if you give her a *chaperone*
" of any *cleverneſs*, may be eaſily managed
" by her contrivance—ſo might Lexing-
" ton's introduction to my Ward—ſo
" might *their* intimacy be forwarded.—In
" ſhort, it will be much in the power of
" her female companion to bring about
" the completion of all my wiſhes; in
" which caſe, you may hint to her that ſo

" ſingular

" ſingular a ſervice ſhall not go unre-
" warded."

I have now opened to my readers as much of Lord Francis's hiſtory, his intentions, his plans, and operations, as will account to them why I ſaid at the beginning of my Narrative—that though his Lordſhip could not, like the Marchioneſs of Stars and her *amiable* daughters, doubt that a union was intended between Henry Lexington and Mary Montague, yet that he would have been glad *to diſbelieve* it, had it been poſſible to cheat himſelf into ſo abſurd a belief. But alas! the authority from which he gained his intelligence brought with it a dreadful certainty, and left all hope of being able to accompliſh the favourite project far, very far behind.

Before I quite diſmiſs the ſubject, and give leave for my company to aſſemble round the dinner table, I muſt ſay a word or two more about his Lordſhip—about the Conſul—about the travels of Lexington—and about the beautiful Roſina, which

which I will try to crowd into one or two pages; at the fartheſt it ſhall not exceed half a dozen, if I can help it.

Every thing was performed by the Conſul with the exacteſt preciſion; and the beautiful Roſina, under the title of Marchioneſs Felicia, placed at the head of her brilliant eſtabliſhment, with exactly ſuch a kind of ſuperintendant as would have been the choice of Lord Francis himſelf, had he been to have made the election. But the preparation for all this agrandiſement took up more time to accompliſh than had entered into the calculation of her Father or Mellows, and Mr. Lexington had actually paſſed through Milan before they were completed. A ſtill more unfortunate circumſtance militated againſt their plan of operations, for not being particularly faſcinated by either the place or people, on his return he only ſtaid four days, to get rid of a troubleſome cold. In all that time he did not leave his hotel, though the Marchioneſs was ready for his reception,

reception, and her *chaperone*, that is Viſcounteſs Melleford, laying in wait to fulfil the engagement ſhe had condeſcended to accept of bringing them together.

Thus were their expenſive traps ſet to no purpoſe, for Mr. Lexington eſcaped them all. It is true Lord Francis had ſtrongly recommended to his Nephew the *beauties* and the *beautiful* women of Milan. When he came back to his own dear country, and told this provident uncle he had ſeen nothing animate, or inanimate, at Milan, that was worth obſervation, the agony of his ſuppreſſed agitation is not to be defined—"What, (ſaid he) have you "ſeen *no* lovely woman there? Is it poſ-"ſible that there is not *one* more cele-"brated than all the reſt of her ſex for "beauty, grace, refinement, and all ſorts "of feminine accompliſhments?"

"I beg your pardon, (he replied) I did "indeed *hear* of a perfect phenomenon in "grace, beauty, and accompliſhments, the

"young

" young Marchioneſs Felicia, juſt taken
" from a convent, and I was told is ſo
" wonderfully handſome, that every man
" who looks at her has a chance to loſe
" his ſenſes; I therefore, my dear Uncle,
" finding I had too few to purchaſe food
" for my curioſity at their expence, pru-
" dently deferred making the experiment,
" till the price of a glance at her charms
" has fallen, or my ſtock of reaſon has
" advanced."

Lord Francis was delighted with the praiſes beſtowed on his daughter, they ſeemed to mellow the ſhock of his firſt bitter diſappointment.—It is not *all* over—he has not ſeen her—he may yet ſee her—Thoſe were his thoughts, but he did not clothe them in language; he only ſaid in reply to Lexington——

" I find, young man, you have not
" made half the obſervations that are to
" be made on a foreign tour; whether
" you or your governor are to blame I
" cannot

" cannot determine, however I would " adviſe you to be in readineſs for another, " and I hope a more profitable one."

" I am always ready to receive im- " prpvements (ſaid the lively Lexington) " if they will come to *me*, and not give " me the trouble of running about in " purſuit of them."

" Well, but Henry, my dear boy, ſup- " poſe *I* am inclined to take a trip over " the ſame ground *you* have ſo lately tra- " velled, ſhould you have any objection " to favour me with your company? I " really have very ſerious intentions to " croſs the Alps, merely for the benefit of " my health, and only wait the firſt ap- " proach of ſpring to begin my excur- " ſion."

" Certainly, my Lord, (ſaid Henry) as " I have travelled once to pleaſe myſelf, " and been diſappointed, my next flight " to the Continent will afford me at leaſt " one certain ſatisfaction, the very great " one of obeying your commands."——

Here the converſation dropped. Henry thought of it no more, but his ſcheming Uncle thought of nothing elſe.

This cloſes the account of Lord Francis —though I wiſh to add to it, by way of appendage, that the firſt appearance of Miſs Montague in his Brother's family had given an electrical ſhock to his hopes, and ſhaken them to their very foundation; her ſweet attractive features had more horrors for *him* than if ſhe had carried on her ſhoulders the head of Meduſa; his lips *praiſed* her, but his heart *hated* her; his words were ſweet as honey, but his thoughts were as bitter as gall:—nobody flattered Mary, nobody careſſed her ſo much as Lord Francis, yet nobody, not even her *own ſex*, wiſhed her all manner of miſchief ſo fervently as he did.

He would ſay to her—"My dear child, "you are certainly the moſt amiable of "all human beings; nobody can dote on "you as I do *except* the Duke; it mignt "look like oſtentation to ſay I love you "as

" as *well* as he does ; but *this* I know, that " if you was my *own* daughter, it is im- " poſſible I ſhould love you better." The moſt engaging ſmile of ſincerity, the moſt manly openneſs of countenance accompanied theſe often *repeated* profeſſions. How then could ſhe doubt them?

He had a friend who knew every corner of his crooked ſoul but one—in that *one* was depoſited the only ſecret he wiſhed to keep from the ſight of all men, except the Conſul at Liſbon.

Of this half-informed friend I have already ſpoken—It was the great lawyer, Mr. Andrew Solemn, a ſucceſsful lawyer, a lawyer of notoriety, in whoſe cuſtody Lord Francis had lodged the moſt private thoughts of his diſſimulating mind.—To him had been freely revealed the extreme diſguſt he had taken to his Brother's favourite, and his repugnance to her becoming the wife of his Nephew.

The oſtenſible cauſe for this unaccountable diſlike, both of the *lady* and the

union, was not placed to its *true* account, that of claſhing with his intereſted views for the eſtabliſhment of Roſina—no ſuch *name* or *perſon* had ever been mentioned to his learned friend and privy counſellor—on the contrary, he pretended it was a *natural* ſentiment of antipathy that ſprang from the aſhes of her father, and gained much credit, becauſe his averſion to Colonel Montague, neither before or after his death, ever wore any ſort of *diſguiſe*, but had invariably ſhewn itſelf in all the *nakedneſs* of malice.——This friend of Lord Francis was alſo the friend of Sir Aſhton Montague.

I have now actually done with his Lordſhip, and he may ſit down to dinner in Groſvenor-ſquare, whilſt I hand out a few more of the ſame party to exhibit them before my poliſhed readers, not in the tight, fabricated robes of *artifice*, but in the looſe, flowing robes of their own natural diſpoſitions.

Lady

Lady Francis you may, if you pleaſe, ſit down by your dear Francy; enough has been ſaid of you already—nature has given you excellent talents for miſchief, but your adherence to a certain unfeminine imperfection has overwhelmed them.

Lady Elizabeth Jones, though very odd, poſitive, overbearing, a lady of *knock-me-down* argumentations, unlearned in thoſe little ſeducing condeſcenſions ſo likely to conciliate *univerſal* good will, is, notwithſtanding, in all other points of view, a *reſpectable* character; ſhe is charitable where charity is a virtue—and if her fame in this reſpect is not equal to her merit, it is becauſe ſhe will not help to throw a veil over thoſe *faſhionable* inadvertencies, many of which the faſhionable world are diſpoſed to treat with more lenity than diſapprobation. *This* (ſhe ſays) is giving a ſort of negative countenance to vice, and ſhould be aboliſhed, holding it as the moſt obſtinate of *all* her opinions, that where

no cenſure follows, *no* reformation is to be expected.

Beſides this eccentricity of judgment, which ran counter to one half of the great world, and beſides the unceaſing clamour of rage with which ſhe contradicted the other moiety, yet ſhe was, I aver, a well-meaning woman, and might have been accounted a *wiſe* one, but for a twiſt in her brain, which prevented Reaſon from performing, by her uſual ſyſtematic operation, her cunning office of regulating the human ideas.

She has too much conſideration for *ancient* principles, and too little for *modern* levities, to be a ſucceſsful candidate for *public* applauſe; and on the liſt of *agreeable* companions her name muſt *not* be entered; but was I to chooſe a friend that would not *flatter* nor *betray* me, Lady Elizabeth Jones ſhould be the perſon. With this tribute of praiſe I diſmiſs your Ladyſhip—go and take your ſtation by the ſide of Miſs

Miſs Montague; ſhe has made an *intereſt* in your heart; you *worry* and *torment* her, but you will never *abuſe* or *forſake* her.

I will not ſay quite ſo much for the Miſs Lexingtons, whoſe turn it is now to be brought forward in the circle of relations aſſembled in Groſvenor Square the very day when the meſſage was expected to return from Riverſdale; ſo great was the impatience of the Duke and Ducheſs of Cleveland to preſent their charming Ward to all the connections of the family as *their* future Neice.

Miſs Lexington is a learned lady, and the moſt unbending of all *female* pedants, except to thoſe whoſe rank and conſequence are *much* ſuperior to her own, or when engaged in purſuit of young *unprovided-for* gentlemen, who perhaps have been heard to declare they would rather marry the Witch of Endor than be the huſband of a *claſſical* ſcholar in petticoats. On ſuch occaſions as theſe, ſhe is as ſupple as the pliant willow, and conceals her

acquirements in the *dead* languages with rather more circumſpection than our modern women of faſhion conceal their *intrigues*.

She had long been made acquainted with her Brother's predilection for the Grand-daughter of Lady Auberry, on whom, in paying ſucceſsful court to the Ducheſs, ſhe is forced to beſtow a large portion of civility; *but* at the Blue Stocking Club, where ſhe is a diſtinguiſhed member, the maſk is taken of, and ſhe laments that her Brother is going to throw himſelf away on a *ſilly* unlettered *girl*, who can neither read an ode in *Horace*, or tranſlate one page of Epictetus. Mr. Lexington, ſhe will add, has an infinity of knowledge, and how he ſo egregiouſly erred in making *ſuch* a choice, is one of thoſe myſteries that no *rational* cauſe can be aſſigned for.

There is yet a better and much ſtronger reaſon *why* Miſs Lexington does not contemplate with any ſort of ſatisfaction the approach of Hymen at her Brother's door:

—ſhe

—ſhe is now ſupreme in his family, preſides at his table; and what in the world is all her ſuperlative knowledge good for, if it cannot drive away the ſaffron-rooted deity when he advances with his flaming torch to light a wife into the houſe, which will of courſe be naturally uſed to conduct his ſiſters out of it. This conſequently makes a deep impreſſion on her ſpirits, and adds nothing to her good humour.

Miſs Maria Lexington is not a learned lady, neither preſides ſhe at her Brother's table; but then ſhe does not deſpair of ſoon figuring away at her own, having a ſcore proper men in her eye, either of whom ſhe thinks will make a good huſband, by whom ſhe ſhould at leaſt eſcape from the tyranny of her domineering governante; and *yet* Maria is not *leſs* averſe to this marriage, or a bit more the *friend* of Miſs Montague than her elder ſiſter.—It is *not* becauſe Mary has *too* little learning, *but* becauſe ſhe has *too* much beauty—it is *not* becauſe ſhe is unable to tranſlate

Epictetus, but becauſe Maria tranſlates into the language of admiration every eye-beam that is caſt upon Miſs Montague by the other ſex.——Put all theſe becauſes together, kind reader, and if thou art thyſelf of *Envy's breed*, or ever created that *agreeable* ſenſation in the breaſt of *another*, thou will want no other clue to lead thee through the winding labyrinths of theſe double-hearted ſiſters; *one* heart full of affection *to* Miſs Montague, and *another* impregnated with averſion *for* Miſs Montague.

I do not like to overload my characters, which may eaſily be done, whether they are ſaddled with too many good or bad qualities; I do not like to hold up a goſſiping tale, as other goſſips ſometimes will do, to lengthen the number of their pages, to try the patience of their readers, or eſtabliſh their own fame for ſpinning out long ſentiments, which have nothing to do with the main thread of their diſcourſe—but I dearly love to ſurpriſe and delight my

my Readers with ſome marvellous event, or the introduction of perſons on my ſtage of action, who come there as unexpected as good fortune to the aid of miſerable, deſpairing indigence.—And the appearance of Lord Auberry in Groſvenor Square to celebrate the approaching eſpouſals of Miſs Montague with his rival, though it may not *tranſport*, cannot fail to *aſtoniſh* them.

One would have thought his Lordſhip was the laſt man in the world to be there on *ſuch* an occaſion, and the only one perhaps who ought not to have accepted the invitation; but he was invited, and he did accept it. His ſoul was not of that milk and water complexion to ſhrink from danger, and *too* well clothed in diſguiſe to fear detection. What he *had* avowed, he *would* ſtand to; and though he had been called upon even to attend them to the altar, he would *not* have declined it: he would have attended them to the very verge of Hymen's Court, but *there* the proceſſion *muſt*

have ſtopped, and the end *would have been fatal.*

The manœuvre of making Lord Auberry a party, was in conſequence of one of thoſe whims which wilful woman *often* lays hold of, and *ſeldom* lets go. The arguments uſed by her Grace, to bring over the Duke and Lady Jane Petworth to her own opinion, were not ſo devoid of rationality, as to be excluded from a place in theſe pages.

" It has lately become *too* much the " faſhion (ſaid the Ducheſs of Cleveland) " for young men of rank, who have no " better way of amuſing themſelves, to " make poppets of our ſex, to dance us " about on wires, to exhibit us on all oc- " caſions as objects of public notice, per- " haps of public admiration, as long as it " pleaſes their own idle fancies; but hav- " ing called us into action, they ſoon grow " tired of playing the *poſture maſter*, hide " their heads behind the ſcenes, and de- " clare they were only in *jeſt*—nay, it is

" better

" better than I expect from them, if they
" do not join in the cry of ridicule, which
" will make itſelf heard through the wide
" circle where theſe ſort of *petite* infideli-
" ties are acted. Now, as often as this
" happens, the *venom* of report lights *al-*
" *ways* on the defenceleſs poppet, whilſt
" the quack, by whoſe magic influence
" we have been made to advance, or
" forced to retreat, eſcapes without incur-
" ring either ſhame or cenſure.——Several
" inſtances, beſides that of Lord Auberry,
" I have known, where, on the very
" threſhold of matrimony, a poor fooliſh
" girl is left in the lurch, and the retiring
" lover has either *denied* the thing alto-
" gether, or, in the multiplicity of his *other*
" engagements, *forgot* the ceremony of
" taking leave."

" But, my dear, (obſerved the Duke)
" what has this alluſion to do in the
" preſent caſe?—The queſtion is, whether
" it will not be impoſing a *too* difficult
" taſk on our timid Ward, to bring her

" *old*

" *old* lover before her on the very day in
" which ſhe will openly receive the de-
" clarations of her *new* one ?"

Lady Jane did not interrupt her Grace, —ſhe wiſhed her to proceed—there was ſomething in her words that began to clear her perception, and ſhe liſtened with attention, in hopes it would be fully enlightened.

" Duke (replied this predetermined con-
" quereſs of all oppoſition), though your
" queſtion involves in it a number of
" other cares, though particularly appli-
" cable to Lord Auberry and Miſs Mon-
" tague, I will not tire out your patience
" by carrying you out of your own ſub-
" ject, but come immediately to the point,
" and confine myſelf merely to them.——
" Lord Auberry has been engaged to Miſs
" Montague—of this truth *we* are con-
" vinced, though *he* diſavows any ſuch en-
" gagement—even to yourſelf he denies it,
" in terms neither vague or indeciſive.—
" You *know* that he *has* loved her, but

" you

" you *think* that he loves her no longer;
" that he conſiders her *now* with *more*
" than indifference—I tell you, Duke, *this*
" indifference is all pretence, the very ex-
" treme of fineſſe—and it is to be ſeen
" with the ſight of half an eye, that he
" ſtill loves her to madneſs."——" Do you
" conceive me, Lady Jane?"

" Perfectly, Madam, and muſt confeſs
" that I cannot but adopt your opinion;
" I believe *other* women may have claims
" on his Lordſhip's *honour*, but I am per-
" ſuaded it is Miſs Montague *only* who has
" any ſhare in his affections."

" Do you grant *this*, my Lord?" aſked the Ducheſs.

" Ladies (he ſaid) were ſo much more
" keen-ſighted than men in theſe matters,
" that he was inclined rather to ſee with
" their eyes than his own:—and yet,
" (added he) if Auberry *is* in love with
" my Ward, he has the oddeſt way of
" ſhewing it I ever ſaw in my life; but
" the more you convince me of a truth ſo

" *wonderful*,

" *wonderful*, the more ſtrongly it appears " to me that your plan of bringing him " and Lexington together, is by no means " *neceſſary* to the ſafety or happineſs of " either party. Beſides, it *muſt* be the " diſturber of Miſs Montague's ſerenity; " for where is there a woman who can " meet with compoſure the man by whom " ſhe has been forſaken and inſulted?"

Actuated by the ſame ſentiment, both the ladies exclaimed at once, " *that* woman " *is* Mary Montague."

" Provided, he returned, I could admit " of one exception to my general remark. " —You have not, I believe, miſnamed " the heroine—yet why, Ducheſs, will " you inſiſt on bringing her to a meeting " that muſt be attended with pain, if not " with expoſure?"

" Do you love your Nephew?" ſaid her Grace.

" What a queſtion!"

" I will tell you why I aſk it, and when " I have done ſo, if you do not allow my

" reaſons

" reaſons to be founded in probability, I " ſhall then try to correct them."

Here was a mighty condeſcending acknowledgment—her auditors were ſo little prepared to expect it, that they remained ſilent, and her Grace continued.

" There is *no* period in the life of man " or woman *half* ſo critical, or that re- " quires more conſideration, than *in* the " formation of that ſort of union which " nothing has the power of diſſolving but " *death* or *infamy*.——Marriage being the " *beginning* or the *end* of all human felicity, " cannot be entered into with *too* much " caution.—What is it that has been the " moſt prevalent motive with at leaſt one " half of our modern wives, who have " diſgraced their huſbands, deſtroyed the " peace of their families, and brought " themſelves to deſtruction?—What but " the ſtale excuſe of a prior attachment? " —Lexington adores Miſs Montague— " *ſhe* imagines her heart to be equally well- " diſpoſed towards him—Now, as their

" happineſs

" happineſs is ſeparately and mutually " dear to us, I would therefore convince " *them*, and be convinced myſelf, that her " preference for my Nephew is not found- " ed on *error*, but on *certainty*; that it is " not the caprice of a moment, but a ſen- " timent that will be laſting and per- " manent. I believe her ſoul to be the " very ſeat of ſincerity, but I know ſhe " is too inexperienced to be properly ac- " quainted with the deceitfulneſs of a " tender heart, or to find out all its ſecret " avenues."

" Why ſurely," interrupted the Duke, with his eyes ſtretched open to the extent of their dimenſions, " you do not think " that ſhe has accepted *Lexington*, and is " ſtill in love with AUBERRY?"

" *Miſs Montague* accept your Nephew, " yet retain her partiality for Lord Au- " berry—*ſuch* a ſuppoſition is incompa- " tible with the purity of her nature."— This was ſaid by Lady Jane—and ſhe added with a ſmile—" I am ſure when the

" Ducheſs

" Ducheſs has concluded her obſervations,
" we ſhall find them as full of propriety
" as they are free from ſuſpicions."

" Have patience, good people, (ſaid her
" Grace) and I will ſufficiently explain
" myſelf to make you underſtand, that
" my ſending to invite Lord Auberry on
" my preſent ſuggeſtions do not proceed
" from doubts that can involve Miſs Mon-
" tague in any accuſation of weakneſs or
" duplicity.—Have I not ſaid that ſhe *will*
" ſtand the trial which I, with the beſt
" deſign in the world, am preparing for
" her; yet if I really thought her ſtrength
" was not equal to the combat, ſtill I
" would perſiſt in bringing them together.
" —I hate concealed fires, which, though
" apparently ſmothered, may be rekin-
" dled, and much miſchief enſue.—Had
" we not better provide againſt diſagree-
" able contingencies, by examining the
" danger in every poſſible point of view,
" to ſee it clearly is the way to prevent it
" effectually.——Why, Duke, did you

" expreſs

" expreſs ſo much ſurpriſe on my obſerv-
" ing that Miſs Montague was too inex-
" perienced to be acquainted with all the
" avenues which lead to her heart? The
" obſervation carried with it no imputa-
" tion of ignorance, but what is common
" to all girls in a ſimilar ſituation with
" her own.—What charge of inſtability
" did it leave on her conduct?—None,
" but what her propriety will do away,
" and give additional luſtre to the ſtaple
" virtues of her mind.——Believe me,
" Duke, what I have propoſed is the
" only method to eſtabliſh the felicity of
" our young people.—If Miſs Montague
" has no ſecret preference that lurks about
" her heart for Lord Auberry, his pre-
" ſence can neither diſturb or diſtreſs her:
" —if it ſhould be otherwiſe, it will be
" better for them both that Lexington
" ſhould crown his head with willows,
" than that the heart of his wife ſhould
" palpitate at the approach of any man
" but himſelf. Such a misfortune may

" be

" be avoided, but never can be repaired. " Let him come, and be the mortified " ſpectator of Henry's triumph, of Miſs " Montague's indifference to himſelf, and " of his own defeat."

The Duke heſitated.—" Would not the " invitation convey more of inſult than " of civility?" he aſked.

" Certainly no, (was her reply) we in- " vite him only as the couſin of Miſs " Montague, and on the preſent occaſion " it would be hardly pardonable to paſs " him over, who, except Sir Aſhton Mon- " tague, is her neareſt male relation. I " ſhall ſend a card to the latter, (ſhe " added) though I know he is out of " town, but theſe are forms which cannot " be diſpenſed with."

I muſt, for brevity's ſake, ſuppoſe all the world will be as well pleaſed with the Ducheſs of Cleveland's mode of reaſoning, as were the Duke, Lady Jane Petworth, and myſelf; for was I to aſk them the queſtion, and they ſhould teſtify any diſapprobation,

diſapprobation, I could not ſtay to put them in good humour; the whole party are ſetting down to table, where it is as much my buſineſs to follow them as it is incumbent on a ſhort-hand writer to attend the Houſes of Parliament.—What elſe would become of the brilliant ſpeeches ſaid to be made there? though it happens to be a miſtake, for it is a well-known fact that they are *made* and *ſtudied* at home, and only brought *there* to be repeated.—The concluſion to my inference is this—Who is there that can tell you what paſſed before, at, and after dinner in Groſvenor-Square, if I am not on the ſpot to report it?

Miſs Montague was acquainted with the meſſage to Lord Auberry prior to its being ſent away. When the Ducheſs aſked if ſhe ſhould have any objection to his being invited?—"None in the world, "(ſhe replied) he has a right to my civi-"lity, as being connected with my mo-"ther's family; in all other reſpects, I

"am

" am quite as indifferent to his preſence
" as his abſence."

" It will do, (ſaid her Grace afterwards
" to Lady Jane) and this charming girl
" will riſe ſuperior even to *our* expecta-
" tion."

All the company were got together before Lord Auberry made his appearance, and Miſs Montague had received joy from them with that ſort of expreſſive happineſs beaming from her intelligent countenance, that announced in lively characters innate dignity and innate compoſure, unmixed with exultation, coquetry, or confuſion. Her dreſs for the occaſion had been preſented to her by the Ducheſs, ſimple in its appearance, but in reality, of immenſe coſtlineſs; my female readers will perhaps want to know what it was made of. Can I have the conſcience to refuſe them?—By no means—it was a round gown made up in the plaineſt manner, but compoſed of Bruſſels point, which for the fineneſs of its texture, might have vied with

with the head-dreſs of many court ladies on a birth-day night. Her turban and handkerchief were of the ſame materials, though not put on by the meretricious hands of faſhion; nor did ſhe look ſo much like Venus attired by the Graces, as ſhe reſembled Simplicity, the bluſhing daughter of Nature, decently arrayed by her attendant virtues, Eaſe, Neatneſs, and Modeſty. She wore no jewels, but her lovely arms and neck were encircled with pearls; ſhe had roſes of the ſame on her ſhoes, and all her other ornaments, like the pure mind of the wearer, were immaculate, without ſpot, and without blemiſh.

Intereſting, amiable Modeſty! how comes it that thou art diſcarded from the toilets of ſo many Lady Charlotte's, Lady Suſan's, Honourable and diſhonourable Miſſes? Is it, poor Modeſty, that thou haſt abandoned them? or have they rudely forbidden thy attendance? Have they turned thee quite away, to make room for a more modern hand-maid? Yes, it is too true,

true, *Licentiouſneſs* has ſupplanted *thee;* it is *ſhe* that gives the matronly ſwell to the maiden figure; it is *ſhe* that tears from the boſom of beauty the veil with which thou, O divine Modeſty! had carefully concealed it.—Weep not—deſpair not—there are yet a thouſand Miſs Montague's to cheriſh and give thee conſequence.

I cannot help crying out thus, when I daily hear of the outrages committed againſt decency by the preſent mode; and who is there in their perfect ſenſes that will not exclaim with me—Have theſe infatuated girls *no* mothers, *no* fathers, *no* brothers, to ſtop the progreſs of theſe evils?—or is it not worth their pains to preſerve a *daughter*, or a *ſiſter* from diſgrace?

The Ducheſs of Cleveland never appeared more ſenſible of her own importance than in the act of contemplating the jewel of high price, which ſhe looked upon herſelf as being the chief means of entailing on her huſband's family. She ob-

ſerved, that neither Mrs. Oxburn, or the Miſs Lexingtons, ſeemed to underſtand the extent of its value; and ſaid, in a tone which ſhewed ſhe had penetrated into their thoughts, at the ſame time addreſſing herſelf to Miſs Montague only, though all the other ladies were ſtanding round her—

" I think it is quite fortunate that we do " not go into public this evening."——

" Why ſo, Ducheſs," replied the beautiful unconſcious Mary?

" Becauſe," returned ſhe, looking full at Mrs. Oxburn, and next on the Miſſes, " I am perſuaded, my dear, you cannot " be ſeen by young *married* women, *or* " young ladies who are not *provided* for, " without *too* much *ſuppreſſed* approbation: " Admiration concealed raiſes envy—en- " vy creates bile—and bile ill-humour. " Now, you look ſo charming, that the " very ſight of you would ſpoil all the " complections that are natural in the cir- " cles of faſhion."

Neither

Neither Miſs Lexington or Maria wore rouge, and it was therefore impoſſible for them to hide the fluſh of *detection* that unbidden ſprung to their cheeks, and ſpread them with vermillion; but Mrs. Oxburn paſſed it off very well—had her face been leſs plaiſtered with red, ſhe had too much conſtitutional audacity to have betrayed any thing like confuſion.—Laughing thro' her white teeth, ſhe obſerved, "that though "the conſequences of envy were indeed "deſtructive, ſhe did ſuppoſe there muſt "be ſome foundation for the plague of "envy beſides whim and imagination, and "that the diſeaſe muſt be *felt* before the "evil would appear; ſo, as this is the "caſe, (added ſhe, with as much vanity "as *nonchalance)* I am ſafe enough—Hea-"ven forbid I ſhould ever have the jaun-"dice of envy come over my com-"plexion! What horrid figures does this "naſty bile make of people?" Her eyes ſlyly glanced at her Grace, whoſe ſkin would reſemble Paphian marble but for

the traces of that diſorder, which a three years courſe of medicine had not been able entirely to remove.——" If bile (continued " the inſulter) *muſt* be the conſequence of " envy, I find its effects ſo diſguſting, I " will take care not to think better of any " body than I do of myſelf; that having " no excuſe for the one, I may entirely " avoid the other."

Whilſt this battledore and ſhuttlecock converſation paſſed amongſt the ladies, Mr. Lexington was retired with the Duke, who had ſomething to conſult him about relating to the ſettlements, which were already in conſiderable forwardneſs, and perhaps the only buſineſs in the world that he could have particularly attended to on ſuch a day as this, when, in every minute of abſence from his adored Mary, was contained more pain than is to be found in the penance of a devotee, and more ſolitary moments than in the whole tedious exiſtence of a lonely recluſe.

This

This would have been an awful day of trial for Miſs Montague, but that the paſſion of Lexington was equally diſtinguiſhed by the exceſs of delicacy with which it was conducted, as by the vivacity of its expreſſion; he knew exactly the ſort of approaches that would be moſt pleaſing to his divinity, and regulated his will by the chaſte correctneſs of her own; his attentions were not aſſured, obtruſive, or particular, but marked with the three beſt inſignias of a *real* paſſion, tenderneſs, reſpect, and immutability.

When he came back from being cloſeted with the Duke, he ſaw Miſs Montague ſitting down between his two ſiſters, who had been paying her great court ever ſince the Ducheſs called them to order by the retort courteous.

My Readers will gueſs, that when Mr. Lexington returned with the Duke, it was the moſt natural chance in the world that he ſhould ſtation himſelf not very far from

the ſopha which held the fair trio; it ſeemed indeed to be in his direct road to happineſs, and he would neither have turned to the right or the left, if the Duchеſs had not impeded his haſte, by aſking him ſome queſtion as he paſſed near her; and before he could anſwer her enquiries, which he was preparing to do with all imaginary brevity, the whole company were rouzed to obſervation, firſt, by the name of Lord Auberry, and next, by Lord Auberry himſelf.

It was impoſſible in this circle of friends to find any but pleaſed and ſatisfied countenances; whatever ſentiments adverſe to pleaſure and ſatisfaction may have intruded into the hearts of ſome preſent, the miſchief was there chained down, nor ſuffered to proceed further, not even to take a peep from the ſmiling eyes of Lord Francis, or conceal a ſmile on the docile features of Mrs. Oxburn. But however gay, however happy the faces that met Lord Auberry's

berry's approach, there was not one in the whole group more *gay*, more *happy* than his own.

Inſtead of appearing diſordered, as for ſome weeks paſt had been his cuſtom at all the dinners, balls, aſſemblies, and ſuppers, to which he was invited, on this *ſingle* occaſion nothing could be more correct than his *dreſs*, or more polite and collected than his *addreſs*. His firſt compliments were carried to the Ducheſs, and who thought he made them very gracefully, and gave him an handſome reception.

The Duke did not think of his Lordſhip with much cordiality, but in his turn he followed her Grace's example, ſo that there was nothing omitted that the laws of good-breeding or hoſpitality could exact.

Mr. Lexington entertained no ſuſpicion of Lord Auberry's good faith, or honourable intentions; he had heard with aſtoniſhment of his infidelity to Miſs Montague, but this was an infidelity ſo acceptable

table to his heart, ſo advantageous to his views, that whilſt he deteſted the treaſon, he could not hate the traitor.

Of one particular circumſtance he was uninformed—the mean ſubterfuges of Lord Auberry's diſavowals to the Duke and others, every one of which was a diſtinct link *in* the endleſs chain of his Lordſhip's inconſiſtencies. None of theſe had ever been permitted to reach the ear of Henry; all his friends were too much aware what conſequence ſuch a communication muſt have produced even to divulge that part of Lord Auberry's conduct, which was certainly the *moſt* reprehenſible. Lexington did not quarrel with him for retreating from the woman to whom he looked up for the completion of his own felicity, but he would have cut his throat could he only have ſurmiſed that he had treated Miſs Montague with ſo much *contempt* as to *deny* that he *ever* was attached to her. Fortunately ignorant of what would have made him his enemy, and too generous to harbour

bour ideas of diſtruſt in his reception of Lord Auberry, he forgot that he had ever been his rival, but conſidered him as a man leſs happy than himſelf, and as his future relation, whoſe friendſhip he wiſhed to cultivate

I have ſaid that his Lordſhip's compliment to the Ducheſs was a ſhort one—he paſſed from her Grace to Miſs Montague, and with infinite recollection gave her joy on the approaching happy occaſion.

Lord Auberry was entirely baniſhed from her affections long before ſhe ever heard the name of Lexington pronounced —and now that theſe affections were *entirely* devoted to another, and ſhe ſaw his Lordſhip coming towards her with an air of the moſt perfect good-humour, ſhe not only cordially forgave him in her own private thoughts for all his paſt tranſgreſſions, but the kindneſs of her innocent heart extended ſtill further—and in anſwer to his Lordſhip's compliments of congratulations, it enabled her to reply with a ſmile

of

of ineffable ſweetneſs, untinctured by reproach, that ſhe hoped his proſpects in a married life would be as happy and as brilliant as her own.

The image of her maſquerade acquaintance croſſed her imagination at the moment, and ſhe ſilently ejaculated—Oh! that ſhe might be as prudent as ſhe is amiable!—Oh, that ſhe may be Lady Auberry!

Now, though it muſt be confeſſed that nothing could be more polite or encouraging than the good wiſhes which the harmonious voice of Mary meant for the ear of Lord Auberry, yet by ſome chance or other they either did not reach it, or elſe his thoughts were ſo perplexed, ſo diſtracted by the variety of other faces preſent, that inſtead of making the ſort of anſwer ſhe might have reaſonably expected, not a ſingle ſyllable did he utter, good, bad, or indifferent, but turned from her, and began to flirt with the always ready, always willing Mrs. Oxburn.

Dinner

Dinner being ſoon after announced, he gaily led her to the table, placing himſelf between her and Mrs. Tovee, *vis-a-vis* to Miſs Montague, and of courſe Mr. Lexington.

END OF THE THIRD VOLUME.